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ABSTRACT

Based on the realization that the rapid worldwide growth of educational systems over the last two decades has not produced the expected eradication of social inequality, an international seminar was held for educational policy-makers, planners from developing countries, research workers in the area, and representatives of aid agencies of 33 countries. Three principal topics were examined: the diagnosis of inequalities in education and possible future objectives in this area; strategies for the reduction of inequalities; and education and inequalities in the labor market. The perspective of the developing countries is emphasized throughout. Presented in this publication are five selected papers from the seminar and a final report containing a thematic content analysis and synthesis of all the papers delivered. Themes of the seminar papers that were identified and discussed in the final report include equality and educational equality as general and conceptual issues, the global social implications of education or educational growth, the impact of social or structural inequalities on schooling, educational mechanisms perpetuating or reinforcing inequalities, and impact of schooling on social inequalities. (JM)

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An
IIEP
seminar

Planning education for reducing inequalities

EA 015 792

The Unesco Press

International Institute for Educational Planning

An IIEP seminar

Planning education for reducing inequalities

Contributions by
Mark Blaug • Kjell Eide • Louis Emmerij
Torsten Husén • François Orivel
and a seminar report by
Zsuzsa Ferge

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Preface

The exceptionally rapid growth of educational systems over the last two decades would, it was thought, encourage mobility, and thus contribute to the democratisation of society. But the experience in most countries has not confirmed this view. Despite an unprecedented increase in overall enrolments, inequalities—often very wide—still exist between the sexes, between socio-professional categories, between regions, between urban and rural areas; sometimes, in fact, there is a noticeable increase, whether one takes as indicators access to education, achievement level, or the transition from one educational level to the next. These inequalities in education are followed by inequalities in the labour market; and these in their turn produce and reinforce inequalities between individuals and social groups in income, in living standards, and in power.

This is the situation which those concerned with education policy in an increasing number of Third-World countries are trying to change, by making "equality of opportunity" a major target in their educational development plans. But this goal is made more difficult to attain by the fact that the proportion of public expenditure devoted to the educational sector in many countries seems to have reached a ceiling, which foreshadows a progressive slowing-down of the growth of financial resources. Reliance can no longer be placed, therefore, on the continuing expansion of the educational system for the gradual disappearance of inequalities. It is therefore necessary to make profound changes in the orders of priority and to find new strategies of organisation and planning which will contribute more efficiently than in the past to the reduction of inequalities.

As a contribution to the debate on these questions, the International Institute for Educational Planning organised a seminar on inequalities in education and in employment. The present volume is a report of the seminar and a synthesis of the discussions that took place.

Three principal topics were examined: the diagnosis of inequalities in education and possible future objectives; strategies for the reduction of inequalities; and education and inequalities in the labour market.

The interest of the seminar lies in the fact that it reflected the views of educational policy-makers and planners from various developing countries, research workers in the field of inequalities in education, and representatives of bilateral and multilateral aid agencies. It thus facilitated a fruitful dialogue between experts with different points of view but with a common concern—the aim of genuine democratisation.

This seminar and its conclusions provided valuable guidelines for the Institute's research programme, which is now considering more varied aspects of the inequalities problem. The principal theme of the Medium-Term Plan adopted for 1979-83 is the study of educational reforms, in order to adapt educational planning and administration methods to the new tasks involved in the preparation and implementation of these reforms. Among these reforms, particular attention is given to those aimed at reducing inequalities in education: regional disparities and also inequalities affecting rural areas, women, disadvantaged groups, minorities. This programme is being carried out mainly by co-operation with national research teams and institutions.

We acknowledge with gratitude the financial support afforded by the Belgian government and the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA) for the preparation and organisation of this seminar, and for the publication of its results.

Michel Debeauvais
Director, IIEP

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Final report of the seminar

Zsuzsa Ferge

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Introduction

The seminar—with fifty-five participants from thirty-three countries—was organized by the IIEP with several objectives in mind. 'The rapid growth in education over the last two decades was based on the optimistic assumption that expanding education systems would lead to greater mobility and thus contribute to greater social equality. But the experience in most countries has not confirmed that view. . . . This poses a serious challenge to the political authorities, who have made "equality of opportunity" a major target in their educational development plans.'[1] Starting from this assumption, the participants of the seminar were meant to review, to discuss and to reappraise the evidence gathered by the IIEP on the issues related to inequalities in education. The topics included the diagnosis of various educational inequalities and of their social consequences as well as the strategies which have been introduced with the aim of reducing them.

Besides the intrinsic value of such an analysis, one of the outcomes of the confrontation of the experiences of various countries had to be the identification of areas and issues in connection with which further research was warranted. It was understood that in this way a solid foundation could be laid to assure the social and political relevance of the research projects to be undertaken by the IIEP.

The evidence gathered by the IIEP consisted of twenty-five original and seven background papers (see Appendix), some of them of a synthetic or theoretic character, the majority, however, giving a more-or-less detailed description and interpretation of the educational experience of one or several countries. On the basis of these papers, three main topics were selected as being worth separate discussion. Accordingly, three working groups were formed around the following issues:

Working group 1	Diagnosis of inequalities in education and possible future objectives.
Working group 2	Strategies for the reduction of inequalities.
Working group 3	Education and work.

As witnessed by the reports prepared by the working groups, the outcome of the debates had a different character in each case. Working group 1 elaborated a matrix presenting the potential indicators which could be applied in studies aiming at uncovering educational inequalities, regrouping them according to possible research fields, and completing the matrix with a taxonomy of situational, analytical and interpretational criteria. This matrix, revised and completed by the final plenary session, seems to be a useful tool for any subsequent research on educational inequalities.

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[1] Introductory Note (IIEP).

Working group 2 developed a conceptual framework for the categorization of the strategies in question, identifying essentially two approaches: the indirect approach, whereby efforts are concentrated on equalizing educational opportunities, i.e. on changing the conditions of learning; and the direct approach, where by intervention an attempt is made to handle the inequality phenomenon itself (by establishing quotas, etc.). The discussion of the experiences obtained by the application of one or the other of these approaches led to some suggestions for further research.

Working group 3 singled out four sub-themes (Demand by Industry, Sex Differences in the Labour Market, The Role of Education in Determining Incomes, Education and Employment/Unemployment), dealt separately with each of them, and identified the controversial issues in each case. This, in turn, gives hints about the problems which need to be further investigated before firm conclusions can be reached.

While the special papers and background papers were certainly drawn upon in the group discussions, the original richness of the information and insights contained in them could not be done justice to in this way: the groups necessarily concentrated on a limited number of issues, leaving many other topics in the background. In order to make as full a use of the available material as possible, the author of the present report proceeded to a thematic content analysis of the individual papers as well as of the material of the plenary and group sessions.

The themes identified by this method may be presented in a number of ways. The framework used here, even if it does not strictly follow the structure of the seminar, is closely related to it. One difference is that it presents the more general, theoretical or synthetic topics under a separate heading, the other being that the problems of educational inequalities are treated in three main groups: inequalities of a social character which affect *access* to schooling; *within-school* mechanisms which affect or reinforce 'original' inequalities; and the impact of educational inequalities in some fields, or the *output* aspect.

The report is organized as follows. Part I presents all the items which deal with current trends, either with those occurring in theoretical thinking or with those describing facts or concerned with the interpretation of observed trends. Within Part I, section 1 presents the themes which raised the issues of social equality or educational equality in an abstract or theoretical way, discussing them as principles.

Section 2 brings together all the issues which deal with the various social implications of education or educational growth, without explicitly touching upon the problems of inequality. These approaches to some extent belong to a former way of thinking about education, when school was considered a main factor of all-round social development, without being treated as the 'big equalizer'. Nevertheless, even these old issues are often handled in a new way, or by the addition of new arguments to well-known topics.

The remaining sections—3, 4 and 5—all take up various aspects of educational inequalities. Section 3 treats the 'input' side, i.e. how social inequalities operating outside the school make their impact felt on the educational process and how they differentiate students (mainly through access) or facilities (in the availability and quality of schools). Section 4 deals more specifically with within-school mechanisms which reinforce the initial inequalities, like criteria of evaluation, mechanisms of selection, biased curricula, etc. Section 5 turns to the 'output' side, i.e. to how the outcome of the educational process affects the existing outside-school inequalities.

It has to be added that this subdivision of the inequality issues serves to clarify the presentation, but is by no means an unambiguous classification. Indeed, it is rather hard to say whether the unequal quality, for instance, of the schools in slum areas and in 'good' areas has to be considered as 'input' or as a 'within-school mechanism'. By the same token, the fact that students coming from different social backgrounds accede at differential rates to higher levels of education can be interpreted at the same time as an initial disadvantage or—because of the subsequent impact of early leaving—as an indicator of the unequal output, etc. Thus these 'borderline' cases are subsumed with some arbitrariness in one or other of the sections.

Part II puts together all that has been said about strategies designed to cope with educational inequalities or their impact. Both strategies which are already applied, or which at present are only at the stage of being proposed, are included. The strategies already at work may be ones which seem to function according to the original intentions, ones which seem to fail or ones which have a mitigated success.

The presentation of the strategies follows by and large the structuring of Part I. Indeed, it seems as if each inequality problem triggered a special strategy meant to eliminate it. (Incidentally, this may be one of the reasons for so many failures or side-effects, a problem I shall come back to.)

Part III gives a brief account of the research topics proposed by the participants—in a rather unstructured way. Indeed, it consists of several lists as they were elaborated either in the original papers or by the working groups. Interestingly enough, the proposed topics are perhaps less influenced by the structure of the reality to be investigated than by the personal interests of the authors, or, maybe, also by some tacit assumption about what is 'fashionable' or 'prestigious' in research.

Finally, the last part contains some 'afterthoughts'—comments of the rapporteur on certain issues which did not get enough attention in the debates.

I. Principles, diagnoses and interpretations

1. Equality and educational equality as general and conceptual issues

Equality in se *and* per se. There is a growing awareness that the concept of equality is on too high a level of abstraction in order to be relevant within the perspective of social action or even for the purposes of social analyses. Therefore several papers (more specifically *22*, *25* and *26*)[1], pointed out that the search for equality should be qualified.

First, it was emphasized that 'perfect' equality is not a realistic aim, and that it would be more important to try to define the acceptable level of inequalities. It seemed to some that too much inequality was as problematic as too little—hence in any given historical situation an 'optimum' level of inequalities could and should be determined (*D*).

Second, it was observed that 'equality' should not be considered as the supreme or unique social value—other goals and values may be of similar importance, such as economic growth or social integration (*D*). Also, the priorities of these goals and values depend on the concrete historical situation and cannot be defined in a universally valid way (*31* and *D*).

Third, it was repeatedly stressed that the concepts of both equality and inequality were highly value-loaded, hence the debate about them could not but be normative. What is considered as an acceptable degree of inequality and what is considered as just or equitable is therefore in a way arbitrary. Others, however, recognized the socially determined character of this arbitrariness. The implication of this view is that it is not 'society' as a homogeneous whole which determines the tolerable or even desirable amount of inequalities: the various social groups have varied interests and a different relation to existing inequalities.

In summary, only very few participants contested the absolute value of the search for equality. However, there seems to be a need for more clarity in the formulation of goals, there is more concern than previously with the realistic character of the goals; and there is perhaps more concern with the need to define

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[1] The numbers in brackets refer to the papers (see Appendix, page 55 for full list) dealing with the issue in question. (*D*) means that the topic was treated in the discussions (plenary or group).

(in any given context) the optimal or acceptable degree of inequalities than with the need to reduce existing ones.

Educational equality as an objective. As with equality in general, so with educational equality: some voice doubts about the legitimacy of the central place of educational equality within the social goals of any country while so many basic issues are unsolved (*13*). Others want to qualify the unconditional right to equality in education either because there is no way to assure the fulfilment of this right or because more equality entails serious social or economic problems (*D*).

A second current questions more specifically the legitimacy of the goal of educational equality in developing countries (LDCs) (see especially *13*, *15* and *D*). The arguments are extremely varied:

According to some, *the idea of educational equality is merely imported* from developed industrial countries (ICs), or even is *imposed* by them on LDCs, without having a genuine importance there.

The main rationale of the above opinion is that *educational equality is a luxury* in LDCs, because these countries need rapid economic growth and the weakening of inequalities involves high costs either directly (in the creation of services) or indirectly (because it harms efficiency).

Some point out that *it is impossible to fix educational equality as a rational goal* in LDCs, because under their conditions inequalities will inevitably grow for a while, as regional, class and other differentiations are unfolding or reinforced with development. This conclusion is derived from the historical experience of ICs, and confirmed by the current trends in some LDCs.

There is another way of putting the above argument: in fact, some maintain that *the whole problem has no sense* in LDCs because, while they do have regional, tribal or ethnic variations one cannot speak about genuine social differences or inequalities in their case.

While these opinions were voiced with much strength (and, with the exception of the 'luxury' view, were mainly upheld by experts from ICs), there was a less vocal but perhaps more widespread conviction about the importance of the issue even for LDCs. Those in favour of the goal argued, essentially, in two ways. On the one hand they questioned the current interpretation of efficiency, which stresses exclusively its economic dimension. On the other hand, they maintained that no country could be entirely independent from a 'world mood' or, more elegantly, from a world ethos in which social equality had a very prominent place. Taking into account that out of the nineteen empirical papers seventeen dealt with LDCs (of which thirteen were prepared by 'local' people), and that in each case the educational experience could be meaningfully analysed in terms of the equality issue, one may probably conclude that LDCs are not really inclined to reject the issue or to consider it as misplaced or anachronistic under their conditions. Nevertheless, it was stressed more than once that the relevance of the equality issue for LDCs depends on the interpretation of the concept and that probably the imputed meaning and the role of the concept are not exactly identical in LDCs and ICs.

The interpretation of educational equality. Several conceptual frameworks were (or may be) proposed as instruments to organize or classify the various interpretations.

One of the approaches (*8*) distinguished the socialist and the liberal interpretations, where the first is aiming at an all-round education, ignores elitism, integrates school and work, values political knowledge and co-operation, while the second offers education as a social service with the main aim of assuring equal opportunity to everybody.

In another perspective one could identify several interpretations forming, by and large, a continuum according to the broadness of the coverage of the concept (*2*, *13*, *21* and *D*). At the lowest level, educational equality is conceived of as the equal right to education (with or without qualifications). At the second level the concentration is on equality of access or enrolment. The concept is further widened if the quality of the service and the retention rates are also considered. At the highest, most ambitious level one also speaks about the quality of outcomes, or outputs, or results. While there was no consensus as to whether one or other of these interpretations was relevant for LDCs (or even ICs), it was by and large recognized that there has been a shift in the accepted meaning of the term towards the broader interpretation.

A third approach (*21*) pointed out that educational equality was usually understood as a one-dimensional value, as equality of access or success according to one value-scale. In this case, some inevitably fail. If, however, the spectrum of values is broadened, the options offered are practically always hierarchized—so that inequality creeps in again. Hence the problem of the interpretation of equality is whether it is possible to multiply the values without, at the same time, ranking them along one underlying dimension.

The relation between educational growth and equality. An 'optimistic' current and a 'pessimistic' current are easily discernible here. 'Pessimists' interpret the available evidence—that educational growth does not necessarily lead to more educational equality either within or between countries—as the proof that educational efforts have been largely vain (*15*, *18*, *22*, *D*). Some may add that, since for financial and other reasons the frames of higher education are fairly rigid, the inequality in access to higher education cannot well be further reduced (*25*). There is also a widely shared fear that current and coming economic difficulties may strengthen the conservative positions, so that the compelling force of the equality ideal may lose its attraction and the efforts and the funds spent on promoting it in the past may diminish (*D*).

Those of opposite convictions also realize that the easy optimism of the early sixties was largely unfounded, and feel that the possibilities of change have to be evaluated more realistically. Nevertheless, they tend to interpret the available evidence (on the spread of educational facilities, especially at primary level, on the success of a number of educational experiments, etc.) as proof that educational inequalities may be reduced if growth is geared to this effect (*7*, *10*, *19*, *20*, *D*). There is one fact which mitigates 'unconditional' optimism: even in educationally highly developed ICs and in those which fare rather well in the field of reduced educational inequalities, there seems to be a group of children who for various (though mainly socio-economic) reasons are dropping out before they have completed primary school and are subsequently becoming marginal. None the less, those who have (or whose countries have) favourable experiences in the area tend to affirm that disillusion with the equality issue will usually arise where no genuine attempts are made to weaken educational inequalities (*D*).

2. The global social implications of education or educational growth

The themes under this heading do not refer explicitly to problems of educational inequalities. They may sometimes imply their existence or the necessity of their reduction, but do not take up the issue directly.

Education and the social structure. One set of opinions stresses the role of given educational systems in the reproduction of the social structure or the unequal structural relations, and in the transmission of social advantages or disadvantages between generations (*15*, *22*, *25*). The mechanisms of transmission, well known (or supposed to be known) from other sources, are not discussed in detail, only some elements are mentioned. Thus, some evoke the difficulties of curbing private interests (*24*), which, therefore, help the strongest groups to profit most from educational growth. Even if the state or public sector is more or less controlled in this sense, second—private—networks counteract its impact (*3*, *8*, *9*, *24*, *27*). Also, the most widespread, basic within-school mechanism—individual competition and the effort to obtain individual advantages—is often invoked as a factor in the reproduction of inequalities. On the one hand, individual upward mobility (a kind of social brain drain) weakens the disadvantaged groups in general (*10*, *D*), and, on the other, with the race for degrees and diploma inflation, those who arrive late—even if they arrive—reach only less valued positions (*11*). Some raise doubts about the existence of the process of reproduction either in general (*2*) or in particular in LDCs, on the grounds that in the latter countries the vast majority are poor and therefore the new élite cannot be composed exclusively of the already privileged (*13*). However, the countries in question, and even some at the very beginning of their industrial development, are sensitive to the reproduction issue (*6*, *7*).

Another characteristic approach shows that the learning process and the reward system of the school prefigure the social arrangements. Learning tasks are structured in the same way as production tasks (i.e. they are mechanistic, hierarchic, fragmented) (*28*). Also, the whole process is geared towards encouraging conformism (*D*), towards the formation of 'responsible adults' who can function in hierarchic societies requiring subordination, discipline, motivation to external rewards (*28* and *D*). Hence, those leaving school will not question the given arrangements—which assures the perpetuation of the *status quo*.

Education and participation. The former (one might say age-old) and almost universal belief that more education is one, perhaps the most essential, condition for a more integrated, more enlightened participatory society is, by now, somewhat shaken (*13*, *21*). Some papers (*9*) refer to the well-known fact that the cultural or cognitive results of schooling, including literacy itself, are largely lost later on, because there is no possibility to apply in everyday life the acquired skills and knowledge.

Nevertheless, on the basis of several new experiences some continue to maintain that education has to create the conditions for the emergence of new political forces (*10*). The new element is the emphasis on the link between school life and adult life. In this respect it is suggested that it is only the integration of work and learning and the democratic atmosphere of the school, with the symmetrical student–teacher relation, that could prepare people for participatory democracy (*28*).

Education and economic growth. The long-lasting chicken–egg controversy, whether the increase of schooling is a preliminary condition or a result and consequence of economic growth, is far from being settled (*13*, *22*, *24*, *26*, *D*). Current evidence seems to point both ways: in some cases more education had a direct positive impact on production, in some others one can speak of economic loss (because of 'over-education', etc.). The historical experience of ICs (where economic take-off usually preceded mass education) is not conclusive either. It is highly debatable whether historical trends occur in the same way in an entirely different world setting.

Those who maintain the primacy of education in economic growth are themselves divided as regards the relative merits or importance of 'general' versus 'vocational' or specialized education. (The issue remains implicit in the majority of papers, more explicit references are in *16*, *17*, *24*, *D*.) This problem is, of course, closely related to employment and labour market.

Education and employment. There are two sets of opinions on the relationship between education and employment. The first emphasizes the necessity and the possibility of matching educational output and the demands of the labour market. If, by means of manpower and educational planning, schooling takes into account future demands, this helps to avoid subsequent frustrations (*11*, *20*). This view is most closely adhered to and most consistently applied in centrally planned economies. The possibility of strict manpower planning, and hence of educational planning, is largely contested on various grounds which were not treated in detail in the debates. Nevertheless, the possibility of matching is often evoked in market or 'semi-market' LDCs, too, especially at the level of vocational training (*1*, *17*) (implying that vocational schools should be responsive—or are organized in a way to be responsive more than other types of education—to the demands of the labour market).

A second, very influential and widespread set of opinions deals with the various aspects and consequences of the so-called 'mismatch' between education and employment. The basis of the mismatch is the rapid expansion of education corresponding to the accelerated increase in social demands towards education (*2, 11, 15, 25*). The impact of educational growth on employment is multiple:

The education requirements of the same occupations are increasing over time with or without a change in the contents of the job (*17*). This fact may reinforce credentialism.

A kind of screening occurs: the more educated move into jobs held previously by the less educated. This reduces the social rate of investment to zero (*2*), but reduces also the life chances of the less educated (*D*).

Despite the diploma inflation, the job expectations of diploma holders are not changing. Hence, mainly in the case of continuing full employment and economic prosperity, the attractiveness of the job becomes more important than the income derived from it. In the case of recession and unemployment, the same phenomenon appears in a different way: qualified people are 'queuing up' and prefer to wait for the 'right' job, thereby aggravating the unemployment problem. (*11, D*.)

As regards unemployment, its relation to education is again controversial, at least in two respects. On the one hand, the available evidence is interpreted in different ways so far as it concerns the most exposed groups. Some conclude that there is a U-curve, meaning that those with completed secondary education are most prone to unemployment (*8, 26, 27, 29*). Some question this evidence on the grounds of the uncertainty of unemployment statistics (thus, for example, less educated and hence less-vocal groups may be under-represented in unemployment statistics—women belonging there, for instance, do not even appear as job-claimers) (*D*). Some add that women in general are more exposed to unemployment than men (*29*).

On the other hand, there is a causality debate involved. 'Over-education' is seen by some as the main cause of the mismatch between education and employment and the main cause of employment itself. Some see this relation as only partly caused (i.e. the causality may be true at specific levels of education but not in a general sense). And there is also a strong opinion that education and over-education are used only as the scapegoat to justify the existence of unemployment. The causes of unemployment are rooted in the general economic organization (*3, D*). One cannot therefore say that there is too much education, but only that there is too little of everything else (e.g. of adequate demand for educated services in a number of fields) (*D*). The problem of the need to transform the social organization of work so as to assure both full employment and the utilization of education is referred to only marginally (*3, 12, 15, 28*).

One factor of the mismatch seems to be that employers, at least under certain circumstances, do not require educated people or are even reluctant to hire them. Their system of criteria entirely differs from that of the school (*16, 17*). Also, if working conditions are bad, only the uneducated can be employed without risk (*D*). These findings lead to the conclusion that in any given situation several employment functions have to be considered (*D*).

Only a few participants mentioned the other facet of the education–employment 'mismatch', that certain types of 'under-education' could well coexist with over-education. Hence in some LDCs there is a preference for foreign degrees or foreign experts for complex tasks (*27*), for the lack of adequately trained personnel means that modern plants are operated below their capacity (*1*).

Finally, reference was made to a special consequence of educational growth. Namely, it seems that, if schooling opportunities are large or demands saturated, the old relationship between education and occupation is weakened or tends to disappear, so that 'good' jobs are more related to a 'good' social background than to the level of education acquired (*11*).

3. The impact of social or structural inequalities on schooling

'Social' inequalities encompass here all those differentations which are socially 'loaded', i.e. which entail inequalities even if the factor of differentiation itself is not 'social' originally, but biological, like sex or ethnicity, etc.

Socio-economic background. The role of the socio-economic background (or class position or occupation of parents) is by now one of the best-known (even if not the best-documented) factors leading to all kinds of educational inequality. Thus the majority of the papers took this fact for granted and mentioned it almost without comment. Only in some cases was there a more thorough attempt to ascertain statistically the impact of socio-economic background on access to and progress through the educational system at different levels of the system and in a diachronic way (*12* and, in part, *25*).

The approach to and evaluation of social-class type differences is, however, rather uneven, partly because development itself has taken different paths, and partly because the interpretation of the facts is far from being unambiguous. In some cases revolutionary—socialist—social changes seem to have done away completely with these types of inequalities (*20*). In some other countries having also undergone a revolutionary transformation of a socialist character, former social-class inequalities have indeed disappeared, but similar differentiations have reappeared, though in an attenuated form, which are related to the current social division of work or the structure of power (*7*, *12*, *15*). Furthermore, in some ICs spontaneous development and some educational strategies seem to have reduced extremely radically the former class differences (*25* and *D*). (Although the present report tries to be neutral and refrains from comments in giving an account of the various views, it has to be added here that the amount of social differentiation found depends largely on the social categories applied. In the case of (*25*) 'workers' are considered, for example, as one homogeneous category. It seems, however, that within-class differentiation is strengthening in all ICs, entailing, for instance, the marginalization of one fraction of the working class (*D*). To some, it may also seem spurious to reduce the statistical difference on grounds of IQ differences while innate abilities cannot be measured at all. Similarly, the handling of educational institutions may also influence the result, e.g. findings will differ if institutions of secondary education or higher education are considered a homogeneous rather than a socially hierarchized set, etc.)

There is also a variation in the importance accorded to social-class type inequalities, partly, again, because of their objective role, and partly because of ideological reasons. Thus in some cases this seems to be the pivotal issue, and the evolution or, better, the reduction of class-type differences is considered of fundamental importance for all other inequalities. Hence, class categories are central in analyses as well as in strategies (*3*, *12*, implicitly in *9*, *28*). In many approaches the most visible inequalities such as regional or sexual ones are accorded primacy in diagnosis and strategy, and social-class differences are considered as an additional factor within the primary differentiation—usually made without directly analysing the relationship between class and other inequalities (*13*, *29*, *32*). In a number of LDCs this latter approach may be the only justified one, partly because social class formation is really only at its beginnings, partly because it is politically difficult to face the class issue in a direct manner (*3*, *6*, *7*, *D*). Also, especially in African LDCs, the newly emerging social differentiation does not as yet go together with cultural diversity, so that, in school, the social background of the child plays a lesser role than elsewhere (*3*).

Sex and education. While it may be debatable whether the class issue is as important or less important in LDCs than in ICs, hardly anybody questions the fact that inequalities based on sex are much graver in LDCs than in ICs (*29*, *D*). A number of factors conspire to create or stabilize the disadvantage of women, many of them entirely absent from more modern economies. The main underlying reason seems to be (even if it is not evoked in this way in the papers) the preponderance of the traditional economic organization, in which family, tribal and economic relations and roles are closely intertwined. In this case piecemeal reform—i. e. change in women's situation in *one* subsystem—either may be impossible or may threaten to cause social disintegration. The complexity of the situation is further increased in a number of LDCs by a religious element which legitimates the domination of women, with religious taboos which are especially difficult to handle. The papers and the discussions revealed various aspects or indications of the 'disadvantage' of women.

Thus, mention was made of some *economic* obstacles: in some cultures girls start work very early in trade or agricultural production, and the family cannot afford to do without their economic contribution (*7*). Also, because women's chances are much worse on the labour market than men's, it is much less wortth while to finance their education (or to do without their present economic contribution in the hope of increased future gains) than that of boys (*7*, *27*, *29*). Traditional *demographic* behaviour (early pregnancy, early marriage) is sometimes invoked (*7*, *18*) but *'cultural'* obstacles are mentioned much more frequently. Thus parents (especially in animist tribes) may be opposed to the schooling of girls because of the value attached to the traditional role of the wife and mother (*7*); technical education may be a taboo for girls (*18*); Koranic schools in Islamic countries exclude girls after the age of puberty, anyway (*7*); the obligatory separation of sexes, with the attendant need to create separate classes for men and women, hinders even adult education (*9*). A special 'cultural' factor is introduced by the living tradition of some colonial schools which (under English domination) were impregnated by the Victorian conception about sex roles (*29*).

Frequent mention is made of the fact that the disadvantaged situation of girls may be observed at each level of the educational system (*1*, *6*, *8*, *18*, *27*, *29*, *32*), and that it is usually more accentuated at the higher levels (*29* and even *20*).

While the existence and even the large extent of sexual inequalities in LDCs is widely acknowledged, their handling is a matter of uncertainty. It seems to be true in most LDCs that 'sexual disparities, while an affront to universal feminism and notions of equality and a source of under-utilized human potential, are not yet subject to urgent political demand' (*5*). Hence, the reduction of these inequalities may be considered a low priority in many cases.

Ethnicity and language. The ethnic problem remains very much an underlying issue both in the papers and in the discussions. (Only *18* explicitly states that former dominating foreign ethnic groups still have better educational facilities.) This may well be because of the overwhelming importance of national integration in practically all the LDCs, which militates against even the acknowledgement of ethnic or tribal inequalities (*3*, *5*).

Therefore, ethnic inequality is usually tackled through the form which is most relevant in school, and this is the language issue. (The approach to it is the regional one, to which we shall turn presently.) The multiplicity of local (tribal) languages, while it exists in many LDCs, is mentioned explicitly only in a few cases (*6*, *9*, *24*), but (*4*) deals only with this problem. If there are several local languages, a number of policies may be adopted as described in (*1*) or (*14*), ranging from the full domination of one of them, through maintenance of a plurality in view of 'cultural preservation', to a real linguistic pluralism. However, this last solution seems to be hard to implement in a lasting way. Also, even if there is a genuine attempt to give absolute or equal status to local languages, their 'unfitness' for educational purposes (the lack of an alphabet, or written materials, etc.) creates serious difficulties (*4*, *6*).

The language issue is further complicated by the fact that in many LDCs the language of the former colonial power became and remained the language of power or administration, and sometimes also of business or of the modern sector in the economy (*4*, *6*, *9*, *D*). Where this is the case, one sometimes observes a growing demand for education offered in French or English, which clearly runs counter to the effort to build up a national identity.

The ethnic-linguistic issue is not only politically but also ideologically loaded, mainly because of the close interrelation of language and culture. Linguistic unity promotes communication and integration within a given society, and obviates the formation of second-rate educational networks (offering teaching in what are considered minority languages). At the same time, this homogenization threatens cultural diversity. The introduction of one language leads usually to the dominant position of this same culture, so that other linguistic groups undergo a process of acculturation—which is also a process of submission, at least in the cultural sense (mainly *14* and *D*). The values involved are rather hard to judge in terms of the commonest political or ideological classifications (as 'conservative' or 'progressive', etc.); at any rate, all possible outcomes show mixed results if analysed in these terms. In a way one could say—from whatever standpoint—that there is no 'good' solution to this problem, and even an 'optimal' compromise is hard to define.

The regional problem. The problem of regional inequalities was analysed in much more detail than other structural inequalities, both in the papers and in the discussions. This was for a number of substantial reasons. For instance, the problem was for long neglected; in LDCs this may be the most important and most visible form of social inequalities, having far-reaching political implications; the feasibility of any reform may be enhanced if it uses the regional approach, etc. In addition there is a more immediate reason which explains the prominent place accorded to the regional issue. This is, namely, that IIEP (because of the importance of the above-mentioned reasons) launched a special research project on 'Regional Disparities in Educational Development' in 1978, and a number of monographs, prepared for this project, served as background material for the seminar on educational inequalities in general.[1] Hence, of all the themes figuring on the agenda of the seminar, the regional problem was the best documented and its implications were the most thoroughly elaborated.

The regional problem is extremely complex because it is the product of (or the umbrella concept for) the combination of a number of social inequalities. In other words, several structural problems appear in the guise of, or may be conceived of as, regional inequalities. More specifically, the following issues are involved: the ethnic–tribal differentiation may be expressed in this way; the centre–periphery inequality, i.e. the unequal distribution of power may be grasped as a regional problem; the urban–rural differences, which have far-reaching economic and social implications, may also be seen as a regional problem, especially in LDCs where entire regions may be almost completely rural, without towns and without industry; and because of the relationship between industrialization, urbanization, power centres and regionality, the social composition of regions may substantially differ, so that social differentiation in the strict sense may also be apprehended as within the system of regional inequalities. These interconnections were referred to (*3*, *12*, *13*, *26* and *D*) but the implications, whether for research or for policy-making, were not explored. In spite of the lack of conceptual clarity the seminar was able to apprehend and describe regional inequalities and to elicit some of the dilemmas created by them.

A research dilemma. The blurred character of regional inequalities creates some difficulties in the course of any regional analysis. In fact, the various studies use different analytical 'units' without really explicating the rationale for the application of particular units. The authors of one paper, (*3*) summarizing the studies prepared for the regional project, mention the application of geographic, socio-historical, economic, linguistic, ethnic, cultural and administrative units. Taking into account the papers of the seminar, the following units were applied in the analyses (whether substantiated by statistics or not):

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[1] These monographs have been published in two volumes, *Regional disparities in educational development: a controversial issue* and *Regional disparities in educational development: diagnosis and policies for reduction* (Paris, Unesco/IIEP, 1980).

Administrative units (*5, 6, 8, 12, 18, 19, 24, 30*).

The urban–rural dimension (*5, 8, 9, 23, 27* and *32* treated this as a dichotomy, *12* as a continuum).

Geographic-ecologic units (*12, 13, 18, 24, 26*).

Ethnic-linguistic units (*5, 6, 7, 23*).

Cultural-political units (*14*).

Socio-historical units (*13*).

The problem introduced by this variety is at least twofold. It obviously hinders cross-national comparisons. But what is more important is that any unit may be used for the sake of convenience (for instance, because statistics happen to be available in this breakdown), or because of a kind of research tradition—and one does not know what the within-region situation is, i.e. whether the classification based on the regional units applied really constitutes the most powerful factor in explaining regional disparities of any kind.

With some exceptions (*3, 5, 13*) the implications of the selection of regional units were not addressed directly by the seminar, but the problem became clearer.

The presentation of some findings. Despite the variety of regional units used, the indicators applied to describe regional inequality form a rather uniform set. Also, in the case of the indicators, there is a fairly elaborate conceptual framework covering the various aspects of regional inequality. The system of indicators based on this framework is quite exhaustively summarized (in *3*), taking into account problems like the unknown relation between resources and results or the difference between apparent and effective quantity or quality (and hence the necessity of measuring both in both cases). This system of indicators includes, then, the following:

Accessibility to schooling at different levels, defined as physical accessibility (the existence of the service), financial accessibility (various costs) and even socio-cultural accessibility (the problem of drop-outs).

Apparent quality, in terms of the qualifications and composition of teachers, quality of the buildings, teaching organisation highlighted, e.g. by the most widespread if not the most significant indicator, the pupil/teacher ratio, etc.

Effective quality, e.g. the real treatment of the clientele, which could be grasped through such indications as the intensity and the manner in which facilities are used, or the attitude of teachers towards different groups—if these can be assessed at all.

Results, understood as access to different levels, as progress through the system and as knowledge acquired.

The various empirical studies use one or more of the possible indicators, but virtually none described the qualitative side in a systematic or exhaustive way.

The facts about *accessibility* most often reported in a systematic way relate to literacy or illiteracy rates, high rural illiteracy still being a burning issue in some LDCs. Enrolment rates for different levels are widely used, and in this connection it is usually recognized that regional inequalities are greater at higher educational levels (*8*, *9*, *19*, *23*, *24*, *27*), with the major exception of pre-primary enrolment, which is low in LDCs everywhere (*9*, *24*). It is, however, sometimes also explained that at least the network of primary schools could be developed at a rapid rate (*19*, *20*). The unequal distribution of students is often represented by 'concentration ratios', pointing out the share of the capital within the whole population and within the student population (*8*, *24*). Enrolment rates are completed by dropout, i.e. retention rates, only in one paper (*8*). The allocation of budgetary resources among administrative units and the trends of change in this respect (*19*, *24*) are used as comprehensive measures.

The *quality* of teaching is portrayed by the teachers' qualifications or the pupil/teacher ratio (*5*, *8*, *12*, *24*), but assessments of less formal aspects are almost entirely lacking (some attempts are in *12*). As for the *results*, only some pass rates in competitive national examinations are reported (*18*, *8*), and test-scores measuring (presumably) the knowledge acquired are reported in a few cases (*5*, *12*, *24*). On the whole, the data base, despite notable progress in the last years, is, then, far from being satisfactory.

Some more 'qualitative' aspects of the findings are, however, described verbally—and these contributions are sometimes more important, or more impressive, than 'dry' statistics. The problem which seems to preoccupy a number of LDCs most is that of *rural schools*. In some cases rural children are 'just' underfed, which makes any attempt at teaching illusory (*D*). The buildings of rural schools are often entirely inadequate, and teaching materials (textbooks, paper, etc.) are lacking or defective (*9*, *23*, *D*). Recruitment of teachers in general, female teachers in particular, for rural schools is a major problem in many countries. This is because rural living conditions (dwellings, hygiene, sanitation, etc.) are bad and pay is inadequate; because the training of teachers has an urban bias and they are to function in a non-'educogenic' rural setting; because teacher-training institutions are in town and their students are not prepared to live elsewhere; and also simply because the well-known attraction of towns is not counteracted by either better rural conditions or a feeling of commitment (*9*, *23*, *24*, *27*, *32*, *D*). It would seem, indeed, that the ideological factor—enhanced awareness about rural problems, the development of a feeling of commitment—is perhaps the major lever in helping to solve the problem of the lack of teachers for difficult rural conditions (*1*, *20*, *27*).

Some of the findings related to regional inequalities will be reported in section 4, as some may in fact be considered within-school mechanisms, reinforcing the original disadvantage of rural children.

The trends of evolution in regional inequalities. The unequal economic, social, cultural and educational development of the various regions is the outcome of historical trends. The reduction of these inequalities thus implies a change of trend, if not a radical reversal of past trends. The first problem to be faced is, then, that a change of this type needs to be voluntarist to a certain degree—with all the difficulties involved (*3*). This raises the question whether a centrally managed or a decentralized policy could be more effective in reducing regional inequalities. Since, however, this is a policy option, it will be treated in detail in Part II, which is devoted to strategies.

The second problem of regional trends stems from the first. Whatever the policy pursued—centralized or not, voluntarist or not—the spontaneous social forces which governed past trends will continue to exist and to operate between, as well as within, the regions. Hence, two possibilities have to be faced. On the one hand, if there is no very strong counter-action, it may well be that former regional advantages will be maintained or even increased. This is almost uunavoidable in the case of decentralization (see Part II), but even central decision-making has to reckon with local demands. Hence, in regions where a secondary-school network was already operating, though with low standards, the demand towards more and better secondary schools will be greater than in regions entirely lacking post-primary opportunities (*19*). Also, the 'bargaining power' of better-off regions, and therefore their ability to obtain central funds, will be greater as well (*3*, *13*, *19*, *D*). On the other hand, a reduction of inequalities between regions is more often than not accompanied by an accentuation of social inequalities within the regions. In fact, the new opportunities—whether 'offered' by a central power or created locally—are likely to be utilized disproportionately by the local groups which are already prepared to use them, and know how to use them (*3*, *5*, *12*, *13*). The parallelism of the reduction of inter-regional inequalities and the increase of intra-regional ones has to be reckoned with. Otherwise 'a policy aimed at reducing disparities whose progress has been evaluated on the basis of regional averages risks camouflaging very strong intra-regional disparities, between urban and rural areas, between sexes, between social groups, etc.' (*3*).

The limits and potential 'side-effects' of a regional approach to the reduction of educational inequalities are, then, clearly recognized. Nevertheless, the objective of attenuating regional imbalances is, if anything, ever more compelling. This somewhat paradoxal fact tends to be explained by the political implications of regionalism. As some argue: 'The main impetus to the removal of regional disparities is political rather than educational. The significance of continuing disparities lies in the threat which they pose to national integration rather than in the extent that they betray divergence from the world norms of educational equality' (*5*). Or: 'The objective of reducing regional disparities in educational development can undoubtedly be justified for ethical reasons of justice and social equity, but in practice it is often prescribed quite simply as a political necessity. . . . The realization by various communities in the regions that their educational development is falling behind may, in fact, create very rapidly an explosive situation, and may thus constitute a threat to national unity' (*3*). The political implications are much more acute in LDCs than in other countries, especially in ones where national identity has still to be built up—but the regionalist movement is far from being absent from the European or the North American scene. Hence, some predict that the regional issue—alongside the ethnic and linguistic questions—will gain in importance (*7*).

The evaluation of regional disparities. The last aspect to be mentioned in connection with regional disparities is the differential evaluation of the trends observed. This topic rejoins, of course, the general problem of the evaluation of inequalities. According to some, efficiency may be strongly compromised if funds are allocated equally among regions, because 'the social demand for education in some regions might be low and in others high' (*26*). Therefore, still on efficiency grounds, 'it might pay to withdraw the provision of a certain kind of education in some provinces so that certain families are encouraged to move out of the depressed area' (*26*). In other terms, the view that inequalities, at least a certain amount and type of them, may be not only tolerated but even considered as functional is applied also to regional disparities (*13*, *26*).

In another view, the efforts to reduce regional disparities are not only a political necessity (and in some countries the issue may not be politically loaded) but they constitute one of the possible ways to handle more basic social inequalities—even if they represent an indirect and drawn-out route to the latter objective. The regional approach is considered to be more feasible because it does not directly harm the interests of better-off and more vocal social groups. In this view the increase of intra-regional inequalities has to be considered temporary, and a necessary step in creating the conditions for the further reduction of social inequalities (*3*, *12*).

The two extreme positions—that the reduction of regional inequalities has to take precedence over any other egalitarian policies, or that the regional dimension can be altogether neglected—are not expressed in this crude form. None the less, the first conception is not altogether absent from some countries, which seem to be more sensitive to regional than to other inequalities, while the second is not entirely alien to countries which have a global approach to the reduction of inequalities (*5*, *7* for Tanzania, *20*, *31*).

4. Educational mechanisms perpetuating or reinforcing inequalities at the start

The allocation of educational funds. One of the most heated debates of the seminar revolved around the use and misuse of public (State) educational funds, especially in LDCs. A widely shared opinion was that the funds allocated to secondary and, even more, to higher education are much too high in comparison to what is going to primary education (*13*, *25*, *26*, *D*). (The disproportion is portrayed either by the composition of the budget, or by the per capita costs at different educational levels.) This state of affairs may be criticized on two grounds at least. The efficiency argument, maintaining that the completion of primary education is a 'better bet', this being the basis of economic development, is not relevant in the present context (*D*). The other, more important argument is, however, related to mechanisms operating the school system. The users of post-primary education are, by origin, disproportionately from 'élite' or better-off families. Hence, these strata profit more from public funds than those who never get further than primary schooling (*2*, *13*, *25*, *26*). Besides this social injustice, it is also maintained that the reduction of educational inequalities has to be based on a fully built-up primary education—so that its neglect harms the equality objective.

There is a twofold controversy involved here. First, some contest the absolute and unconditional priority of the development of *primary* schooling. They argue that in a 'pre-literate' economy even the completion of primary school may be a waste for many—unless primary education becomes a kind of 'basic' education. They may also maintain that adult education may be more effective and have more rapid results on the whole society than 'normal' primary schooling (*5*, *13*, *D*). The experience of some countries where the system is geared towards the creation of a strong primary network serving *mass* needs rather than the formation of a small élite seems to be favourable from many standpoints (e.g. *7*, and *5* for Tanzania)—but in these cases the quantitative changes are completed by a deep transformation of educational objectives, contents and methods. Second, it is argued that the social injustice caused by the socially disproportionate utilization of educational subsidies is the price to be paid for the formation of a new intellectual stratum educated at home, and a refinancing scheme (discussed under strategies in Part II) would only render worse the social composition of students (*D*).

Differences between the schools. One aspect of this problem is merely a consequence of the original disadvantage of rural districts, villages and slum areas, which may be aggravated by the misuse of funds. It is repeatedly pointed out that because of shortages in quantity and the defectiveness of the quality of teaching (lack of teaching material, lack of teachers or at least of adequately trained teachers) the initial disadvantage children suffer from cannot but grow (*8*, *9*, *18*, *23*, *24*, *26*, *D*). Also, they are hardly able to compete successfully with urban children coming from better schools if there are selective examinations at any point of their school career (*5*, *24*).

The differences in the quality of teaching become institutionalized and rigid if—within the same educational level—there are different school types or categories. Openly streamed primary schools are rare (their existence is reported (*5*) for Kenya, where urban schools belonging to A, B, C or D categories markedly differ in every respect and the ability to pay is a decisive factor in obtaining entrance to the better 'streams'). A similar phenomenon of differentiation within the public primary sector is also reported (*30*). The institutional differentiation of the primary network occurs in some countries in the form of a difference between rural and urban schools, the former having a shorter cycle (*23*, *30*). Differentiation at the post-primary level is fairly widespread, meaning the coexistence of more academically oriented and more vocationally oriented schools. In these cases the social composition of students shows marked differences (*12*). However, vocational training falls largely outside the traditional educational system, so that it is rarely covered by the papers.

A more widespread solution for the differentiation is the creation of a private channel alongside the State schools. The quality of private schools, however, is not necessarily better than that of the public sector. If one dares to draw any conclusion from the scattered evidence available, the situation seems to be the following. Where enrolment in the public sector is limited by the use of quotas (whether regional or social), and where, hence, the private solution exists, to provide a second chance to those forced out from the public system, there the quality of the private sector may not be better and is often worse than that of the public sector. (It follows that in these cases the private sector appears at the post-compulsory level.) If, however, the private solution is not a forced choice but is created without constraints from the public side, then it is usually of as good or better quality. In these instances financially and culturally better-off families are creating a special network in order to assure a better transmission of their social and cultural 'capital'. Hence where this is the case the private network exists at all levels (from the pre-primary on), crowned by 'élite' institutions at the top. Both patterns may be found in ICs and LDCs alike—depending mostly on the general educational policy and, of course, also on the general social policy of the country. (Scattered evidence is in *5,6,8,9,18,19,23,24,27,29,30,D*.) It is especially the case with the second pattern that social inequalities are reinforced by the school system, but even the first solution, a second-chance network, counteracts somewhat the State intention of reducing educational privileges.

One observation has to be added on the problem of quality. It is by now usually acknowledged that the quality of the schools and of teaching is determined by social factors and varies in accordance with them (e.g. the difference between rural and urban, poor and rich regions, or differences following the social composition of the student body, etc.). Nevertheless, exhaustive educational research has not as yet proved that the quality of teaching has had an important impact on school results. (The issue is summarized in *3*.)

At a somewhat higher level of analysis the problem of differentiated schools may be envisaged as the problem of the relative merits of integrated and segregated schools in promoting equality. It was pointed out that in recent years there has been a strong move away from the earlier organizational patterns marked by separations and hierarchically based segregations. The first step has usually been the bisexual school. Other attempts have been made through the comprehensive secondary school (abolishing the former social segregation due to the existence of various secondary channels); racial integration (e.g. in the United States); and also the coeducation of normal and handicapped children (*10*). At the highest level, integration is understood as the new way of coexistence of the school and the community (*5*, and *7* for Tanzania).

At present there appears to be some disappointment with the policy of integration. Therefore strategies of integration and segregation will also be briefly discussed in Part II.

The relevance of educational knowledge. The curriculum offered by the school has at least a twofold social implication. First, if the school culture is very different from the home culture of the child, and there is no conscious attempt to close this gap, the failure of the child is practically certain (the educational message cannot be decoded at all) (*7*, *24*, *D*). The cultural distance between the home and the school appears usually either as a language problem (*4*, *9*, *24*) or in the form of the difference between the urban and the rural culture. More precisely, it is often reported that the contents of the curricula, as well as the teaching, are urban-oriented, dominated by urban values, and devalue local subcultures (*7*, *9*, *23*).

The other aspect of this problem is that, since the curriculum is not adapted to the needs of the clientele, it cannot arouse or maintain interest. This may be because of the survival of the colonial inheritance, entirely ignoring local needs (*1*), or because the traditional curriculum, which has been designed to produce white-collar workers, etc., has not been changed (*23*). Because the curriculum is not adapted to local needs, the completion of primary school does not prepare pupils for available jobs. Hence, the rural exodus is partly attributed to an education which is alienating from the original surroundings (*D*). The urban migrants themselves are likely to become unemployed, because they are not well equipped for employment in the modern sector (*23*). In this way, parents and children are less and less motivated in going on to completion of primary school, at least in cases—and these cases form the vast majority—where there is no possibility or no intention to continue to study after primary (*3*, *5*, *13*).

Nevertheless, the introduction of a 'rural bias' into the curriculum is contested, at least on three grounds. On the one hand, it is maintained that in this case the rural school could not become an agency for economic change, a lever of modernization (*13*, *D*). On the other hand, there is a fear that a special 'ruralized' education would necessarily become a second-rate education of lower value, and that those completing it would have even less chance for mobility, i.e. that they would be even less prepared to compete successfully with students of the other streams (*D*). Finally, separate channels are seen as a threat to the inculcation into children of values promoting national identity (*D*).

Because of the drawbacks of the rural bias, there is an increasing interest in 'basic schooling', which seems to solve the problem of local needs without curtailing the possibilities of continued studies (*3*, and *5* for Tanzania).

Mechanisms of selection. Educational selection is a process which is partly covert and partly overt. The covert part occurs at each and every point of the educational system. It operates through the dealings of teachers with students, through the characteristics or abilities which are valued by school, through the 'fit' of the curriculum and the clientele, through the presence or absence of efforts to compensate educational 'handicaps', e.g. financial, cultural, etc. (*10*, *D*). One of the consequences of this ever-present and continual selection process is premature dropping-out by children. In this context it is interesting to note that in the different countries the most dangerous period (i.e. when the drop-out rate is highest) may be situated at different points in time, after the first year as well as before the last year (*8*, *9*) or, probably, anywhere else. Whenever school attrition rates are more closely analysed, the results are unambiguous: early drop-out is linked to social, economic and cultural disadvantages (*8*, *9*, *23*, *D*).

The overt part of the selection consists of the school-leaving or entrance examinations. (Visibly, there are different patterns here. Where entry to the next stage is linked to an entrance examination, there the school-leaving examination of the previous stage seems to be quite permissive, or at least not too selective. If, however, it is the school-leaving certificate which confers the right of continuation, there is usually a high rate of failure. It seems that the first pattern puts a bigger load on students, i.e. two exams instead of one, but at the same time it is less frustrating—there is at least one success. This, however, is only an impressionistic remark.)

As for the selective examinations, several problems have been mentioned. If they are national examinations with universal standards, they favour those coming from better schools and from urban schools. The lack of advantage of some groups may be reinforced if there is a language difference between regions and the examination requires one language (*4*, *5*, *8*, *9*). Let us note that the social disadvantages may persist even if the standards are not entirely uniform but partly adapted to the background of the candidates (if e.g. a rural bias is introduced at this point) (*5* for Kenya). Another social bias is almost always built into systems where national examinations play a large role in the selection of students for the higher levels, namely that they may 'have a tight grip over the entire educational system', influencing the contents, the methods and the criteria of evaluation (*5*, *9*). (In a way, that is the usual problem of the 'dual' educational systems, in which, historically, the network constructed from the top down always meant that the universities shaped the lower degrees.)

The most general problem of selection relates to the criteria used. Traditionally, school valued first and foremost intellectual abilities, and school merit used to be defined always in these terms. This is an important factor in the inequalities occurring at higher educational levels (because of the unequal chances of developing the intellectual abilities under varying social conditions—even if the 'innate' abilities themselves do not differ). Currently, the meritocratic approach, at least in this form, is more and more questioned on equity grounds. Hence the various alternatives which have been mentioned in the papers and the debates. They range from the highly controversial solution of 'lottery' selection to the broadening of criteria (including among them character, work ethic, social commitment, etc., which, however, may not be assessed easily or with precision) (*5*, *10*, *D*).

5. The impact of schooling on social inequalities

Several aspects of this issue have already been briefly discussed in the preceding sections. 'Big' issues, such as the role of the school in the reproduction of the social structure, or its role in shaping overall and unequal life chances, or again the impact of education on ways of life, etc., were touched upon only marginally at those points. The two problems which were dealt with more in detail were the relation between education and employment, and the relation between education and income.

Of these, in the case of the relation of employment and education the problem of matching the two, or the mismatch between them, constituted the central issue, as presented in section 2 above ('Education and Employment', page 18). The consequences of educational inequalities were considered only in the case of unemployment, and in the case of women.

Unemployment. In the case of unemployment, as already shown in section 2, the correlation between educational levels and unemployment rates is not altogether clear. Statistical evidence does not support the view that the least well educated, illiterates, or early drop-outs, or those with only primary education, would be the most threatened by unemployment (*26*, *27*, *29*). Nevertheless, it is frequently affirmed that rural primary schools (partly because of the irrelevance of the curriculum) are producing urban migrants who will be unemployed (*9*, *23*).

The case of women. Two papers (*29*, *32*) dealt specifically with female education and employment. Both pointed out that sexual inequality was already very powerful in education, but that it was even greater in employment (*27*, *29*, *32*).

Only a few explanatory factors were mentioned. One of them is that women cannot break through into traditional non-agricultural sectors, sexual segregation being very strong, especially in Moslem countries (*29*). Another factor mentioned is that, for various reasons, girls are under-represented in schools leading to technical or similar occupations, or, in other terms, that they are less well prepared than boys for a modernizing economy (*29*, *D*).

These disadvantages suffered by girls have less impact on the modern administrative sector, thus the discrimination against women in this sector is diminishing more rapidly than elsewhere (*27*, *29*, *32*).

The relationship between educational and employment inequalities in the case of women proved to be a controversial issue. In fact, some participants contested the argument that the employment prospects of women could be improved by more education (on the basis of the current experience of one country, the Netherlands in this instance) (*D*). While this evidence was not accepted as conclusive (and contrary examples were quoted) it was recognized that even significant progress in decreasing sexual educational inequalities would not usually lead to rapid changes in employment, partly because of strong traditions rooted in vested interests, and partly because the growing surplus in educated manpower is not favourable for newly arriving groups, among them women (*29*, *D*).

Education and income. The relation between education and income, or education and earnings, proved to be one of the most controversial points.

It has to be pointed out, first, that the whole issue is discussed according to various theoretical frameworks. As shown in one paper (*22*), these range from the traditional human-capital theory through job competition and the segmented labour-market theory to the Marxist approach to social reproduction. A new approach is also proposed in (*22*), namely a 'non-traditional human-capital theory'. These various frameworks apply different explanatory systems to account for earning differentials, and educational inequalities have a different place in each of these systems. It may be added that the different frameworks are not always mutually exclusive, thus for instance 'traditional' human-capital theory may use the job competition argument too, or the 'non-traditional' human-capital theory may take into account the unequal social relations influencing the labour market (which would 'belong' to the Marxist theory).

It seems that the participants of the seminar themselves were also divided on these lines, but only two approaches were made more explicit, namely the 'traditional' and the 'non-traditional' human-capital theory. (The main difference is that in the first case the economic return of investments is seen as the crucial factor in determining earnings, whereas in the second case capital values are derived not from investments, but directly from expected future earnings. This approach leaves open the question of the factors acting on 'future earnings', which is why it may be easily accommodated with other explanatory systems.)

(For the sake of clarity, it has to be noted that although the terms 'income' and 'earnings' were used almost interchangeably in most cases, usually only earnings were meant. The inequality of the whole income distribution was discussed only in one paper (*26*).)

Partly because of the different theoretical frameworks, partly because the evidence is inconclusive and partly, perhaps, because of the differences in value-orientations, there are opposed views on the impact of educational inequalities on income distribution. According to some, greater equality of educational opportunity does not generate greater income equality (*13*, *D*). Some point out that educational growth and the decrease in educational inequalities affected income distribution, leading to a notable increase at its lower levels (*26*). In another interpretation of the available evidence it is maintained that the surplus of highly educated manpower (which is one component of the reduction of educational inequalities) reduced the top salaries and earnings differentials in general (*2*, *11*). In a more general approach it is not only one or the other tail of income distribution which is mentioned, but the whole pattern of income (earnings) distribution. In this view there is an intrinsic relationship between education and income inequalities, so that these two sets show an isomorphism (*15*). Some may add that this relationship operates only in the long run (*11*), and some point out that—although the relation exists and hence education is an important means to equalize economic outcomes—educational change cannot alter basic structural relations (*22*).

Depending on the above position, there are differences in how one sees the possibilities of affecting income inequalities. Those who believe that there is an intrinsic relationship advocate the indirect approach to equalizing incomes, i.e. through equalizing educational opportunities, etc. (That is why the measurement of this impact is thought to be of importance (*22*).) If, however, this relationship is questioned, but income equalization is still held for a legitimate objective, a more 'direct' approach is proposed. This may consist either of progressive taxation (*25*, *26*, *D*), or of the 'de-linking' of education and earnings. This last proposition was, in itself, amply debated. Its feasibility is limited to the public sector, hence in capitalist societies the policy would drain people away from the public sector. Also, while some argued that in the case of de-linking the intrinsic value of education would grow and this could ease the 'diploma disease', others saw this step as leading to the devaluation of knowledge. Finally, the dangers inherent in this type of voluntarism were also mentioned. The experiences of some socialist countries—in which a kind of de-linking is in fact taking place—were also taken into account. These experiences support the feasibility of the policy in question, although some of its drawbacks may be detected here and there (*3*, *5*, *D*). Also, in these cases de-linking is part of a global social policy—so that the feasibility of the policy is not proved in a universal way.

II. Strategies

Several ideological divergences—though they remained almost always implicit—coloured slightly the discussions on issues of strategy. One of these concerns the possibilities and limits of planning in general, educational planning in particular. Some experts accept the necessity of educational planning even though they may be aware of its limited sphere of action or of various unintended effects (*3*,*5*). The opposite view expresses profound doubts about the usefulness of planning. According to it, macro-plans should be based on reliable knowledge about development sequences and, more specifically, cause-and-effect relations—but this knowledge is in this view lacking (*13*, *D*).

The second controversial issue is related to how liberal a view is taken of policy interventions. (This is obviously close to the first issue, but they do not fully overlap. Some may accept the idea of planning, interpreting the implementation of plans as a fairly spontaneous process.) 'Liberal' and 'interventionist' positions do not form a dichotomy, but can again be arranged on a continuum. The truly liberal, 'Manchesterian' view was not represented at all at the seminar, since all of the participants were committed to some form of intervention in the interest of the reduction of at least some forms of inequality. The other extreme—full totalitarianism—had no spokesman either. However, a number of intermediate positions may be reported.

In some cases a global 'societal' policy commands and co-ordinates deliberate social intervention in all the fields, including education, designing in a central way the organizational frameworks, and carrying along practically everybody in predefined directions. This sweeping impetus occurs, however, only under special historical conditions (*20*, *31*). In another view the planner's task is to create a 'structural arena' which is favourable to some new mechanisms, but without the planner (or the central power) trying to influence in a direct way private decision-making (*13*). This position is (almost by definition) against limitations on private initiative, and usually is in favour of solutions which correspond to a market 'logic'. An intermediate position can also be discerned. Here emphasis is also on the creation of adequate structural conditions and institutional frameworks, but direct or indirect intervention in private decision-making is not excluded, either. This policy takes a stance mainly against market-type mechanisms (in which case issues are solved by the spontaneous play of economic forces and interests) (*12*, *D*). Some of the discussions about strategies, for instance those about the private financing of higher education or about the decentralization of educational decisions, are marked by the above ideological divergence.

The strategies proposed in various contexts can be classified again in a number of ways. One possibility is that used in the report of working group 2, separating direct and indirect interventions. Another possibility would be to discern—following the vocabulary of British social policy—selective and universal methods. In this context universal methods would be those which promote the development of education for all (such as free education), and selective strategies would be those which try to help predefined categories of students or individuals. All kinds of positive discrimination—from boarding schools for rural children through scholarships for needy students to quotas or compensatory methods—would belong here. This classification is useful because the two methods have very different consequences. Universal methods are usually less effective, but have less negative side-effects. As for the side-effects, there is also a major difference between selective strategies which apply to easily identifiable groups and ones which require a thorough control to determine whether the individual belongs to the target group or not. In the first case the negative outcome is the tension between the 'scheduled' groups and those whose interests are harmed (because they have to pay more for the same service, or because some of their members are denied access to a given service because of quotas, etc.). In the second case even members of the target group may be humiliated (the 'means-test effect'). A third possibility for a classification of strategies could be according to the means used (financial, pedagogical, ideological, etc.).

In this report, the presentation of the strategies is organized by and large in the same way as in Part I for problems. This solution seemed to correspond best to the logic of the seminar.

Global strategies aiming at structural effects[1]

Two kinds of strategies will be mentioned here. First, reforms affecting the school structure, which aim at altering the almost 'natural' patterns of social reproduction by postponing e.g. selection and by weakening the hierarchical segregation of former educational systems. Second, reforms which affect not only school, but also the relation between the school and the community, which endeavour to close the gap between different types of work and to prepare pupils for a full adult life (including everyday culture, participation, etc.).

The first strategy (a longer common 'trunk', comprehensive secondary schooling and these combined with instruments stimulating those who are, for social reasons, less motivated), which was more or less consistently applied in ICs in the last two decades, was only marginally referred to at the seminar (with the exception of a more detailed historical account in (*12*)). It seems that this policy presupposes the existence of a relatively well developed (even if segregated) primary network, and is therefore not really relevant in LDCs which are still at grips with the creation of an adequate primary network.

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[1] These correspond by and large to the problems discussed in section 1 above under the headings 'Education and the Social Structure' and 'Education and Participation' (see pages 17–18).

The second strategy—a grandiose social experiment aiming to reunite historically evolved splits between work and study, manual and non-manual work, 'school' and 'life', etc.—is applied in some LDCs which have chosen a socialist way of transforming their society. They may apply it on a full scale (*20*, *31*) or as large-scale projects (*5* for Tanzania, [illegible], *28*). This strategy also occurs in some other countries, but usually in an experimental form (*28* for Spain).

In some cases the above strategy is not followed in full, but some of its objectives are singled out and special instruments are found to implement them. One example may be the so-called polytechnical education, whereby some hours or a day a week are dedicated to learning a manual skill in otherwise traditional schools, with the aim of 'wiping out the colonial concept that manual work is the job of the lower class' (*1*).

The global strategies—simply because they entail a radical approach to existing inequalities, hierarchies and class cleavages—usual imply a thorough democratization of the teaching process and of the relations within the school, between the school and the community, and in the decision-making processes concerning any aspect of school life. Hence, participation in the life of the school and in the life of the community is one of their essential features. 'Education for participation' is, indeed, hard to conceive of in any other way (i.e. as a self-containing strategy) (*28*).

These experiments—which were looked upon with sympathy or even with enthusiasm by many participants—do not last long enough to enable one to draw final conclusions about their effectiveness. (One has to consider also that in the majority of cases they were built up and began to function in rather disturbed historical conditions.) However, it would be important to know what the social, economic and historical conditions are which permit the introduction of these strategies, whether on a large scale or even in an experimental form.

Strategies proposed as a remedy to the mismatch between education and employment[1]

Several formal or out-of-school (non-formal) programmes were mentioned which try to teach immediately applicable skills (*3*, *5*, *8*, *23*). One of them merits special attention because of the reasons for its failure. This was a project of comprehensivization financed by foreign aid with the explicit aim of teaching locally utilizable skills. The problem was that some standards to be met were specified. Their attainment was the condition of continued assistance, but under the conditions of the country in question, the international specifications could not be fulfilled (*8*).

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[1] Cf. 'Education and Employment', pages 18-20 above.

The most ambitious strategy which was proposed to solve the problem of mismatch was that of 'recurrent education', as described in (*11*). This proposition is seen as solving several grave difficulties at the same time. Because of its flexibility, it is anti-cyclic; because it absorbs a part of the manpower, it decreases unemployment; because early decisions are postponed and work-experience helps people to direct themselves, higher education will provide better answers to personal and social needs and it will become socially less unequal; because one may go back any time to learning, the present 'diploma disease' will be eased, and higher education will become less expensive; and with the alternation of work, learning and leisure the whole pattern of adult life will change for the better, etc.

While many of the advantages of recurrent education are widely seen and accepted, there was a lively debate on the issue, mainly because of two problems. In the first place, many of the arguments were considered unrealistic. For example, middle-class parents will not accept delayed studies, so that social differences may even grow; in capitalist conditions, employers will be reluctant to accept the scheme and to reserve jobs for those who study, therefore people will hesitate (if jobs are not plentiful) to give up a good job for the sake of studies; it is uncertain who would pay the salary of those who return to school, etc. There are also contradictions in the argument: the scheme cannot ease unemployment unless there are more people in higher education than at present, but in this case the 'diploma disease' will continue, or the costs of higher learning, even if there are fewer people, will have to rise because adults need to be paid their full salary even when learning, otherwise few could and would use the opportunity, etc. (*D*).

In the second place, it was emphasized that recurrent education is a luxury for LDCs because, if it functions well, it is necessarily more expensive than the present arrangements. Also, the creation of recurrent education presupposes the existence of a fully fledged network of higher studies, which does not exist in the majority of LDCs (*D*).

Strategies intended to overcome initial social or economic disadvantages[1]

In many LDCs the main obstacle to regular school attendance is essentially economic. The most obvious strategy is free education, at least at the primary level. This arrangement seems to be almost ubiquitous; only in a few LDCs is there a contributory scheme to help the construction and maintenance of primary schools (*5* for Kenya). However, free education in itself cannot assure school attendance. Hence, several papers and several interventions stressed the importance of additional economic help. In the case of primary schooling, they mentioned the need for free lunches (*1*, *7*, *9*, *24*, *27*), free distribution of books and other learning material (*1*, *9*, *24*), free transport (*1*, *24*), even the need for clothing, especially in the case of girls (*9*). Teaching methods were mentioned only in one case (that special assistance would be needed for children coming from urban slum are as or remote rural areas, who could not get any home helpin reading) (*24*). In the case of post-primary studies, grants and boarding lodging facilities were the most frequent proposals (*7, 9, 12, 19, 24*).

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[1] Cf. 'Socio-economic Background' and 'Sex and Education', pages 20-22 above.

Administrative measures directly affecting the families were rarely mentioned. Thus, though free and compulsory primary education is often spoken of, the implication—that in this case parents are obliged to send their children to school and may be fined if they are unwilling to do so—is not self-evident (*27*). In one case an administrative requirement is intended to maintain girls in school, stipulating the condition that in marrying a young girl the husband may not withdraw her from the school (*18*).

The most widespread type of direct intervention—quotas in the interest of under-represented groups—was mentioned only once in the case of some social groups (*12*).

The above measures—free schooling, free board and lodging, clothing, grants, etc. during the whole school career—are most fully implemented in Cuba (*20*), as part of the global strategy mentioned on page 37 above.

Minorities and language policies[1]

Despite the gravity and the importance of the question, few language policies were described in detail. A set of steps that should be taken was presented in one paper, (*4*). According to this conception, first the right to teach in a minority language should be assured, then the educational services for minorities should be provided for. However, in order to avoid the usual flaws of minority teaching, the control of the minority over the educational apparatus should be assured, and there should also be an independent organ to arbitrate in cases of conflict.

Such an elaborated language policy is hard to find in practice. Mention was made, however, of some solutions: bilingual programmes at the pre-primary level (*23*); federal subsidies to cover the extra costs of minority-language programmes (*4*); the introduction of a common language (English in the event) at the primary level (besides the local language), so as to assure 'a window on the world' and the opportunity for continued studies for everybody (since at the secondary level the language of instruction is English) (*5* for Tanzania).

Regional policies [2]

Strategies to overcome regional inequalities occupied an important place in the seminar (because the regional issue itself received much attention).

One set of measures is aimed at the creation of educational facilities, either by relocating schools, preferably fixing at the same time the maximum distance between the home and the school (*3, 18*) or by constructing central schools served by free transport (*9*), or, again, by constructing boarding schools (*1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9,*

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[1] Cf. 'Ethnicity and Language', pages 22-23 above.
[2] Cf. 'The Regional Problem', pages 23-27 above.

12, 18, 20). Visibly, the favourite solution was the last one, although this is the most expensive. Despite the popularity of the idea, free boarding schools seem to be rare at the present time (the network is fully built up in Cuba (*4*) and partially in Hungary (*12*), but elsewhere these schools are scattered). It has to be noted that the pedagogical or psychological implications of boarding schools (deciding at what age children could be separated from their families, etc.) have not been touched upon.

The strategy of mobile educational facilities (libraries, etc.) is not mentioned, and only one country study speaks about a mobile trade-training school, which, however, failed as an experiment (*24*).

A second set of measures tries to cope with the lack of rural teachers. The problem may be solved by compulsion (by one year or more of rural service during or after studies) (*1*, *7*). Another solution is the local recruitment and local training of teachers, maybe in an accelerated form (*1*, *27*), or with in-service teaching (*5*, for Tanzania). Patriotic feelings and social commitment are sometimes used as levers for recruitment (*7*, *20*, *27*). The improvement of local conditions or the preferential treatment (increased salaries, etc.) of rural teachers is often seen as a necessity (*3*, *9*, *23*, *D*) but is rarely mentioned as practice (some elements are in *12* and *20*).

The quota system used as a means to assure the equal representation of regions is often mentioned as a potential strategy, but is not quite clear how often it is really applied. (The likely consequence, i.e. that if regional quotas are applied, then the best-off groups of the region will probably profit most, was emphasized quite frequently—but facts were not quoted) (*3*, *5*, *24*).

Since regional educational development requires funds, much attention was paid to the regional allocation of educational resources. The current system which, in some countries, takes into account present enrolment and present costs and distributes resources on this basis, was at times critized on the score that it acts to conserve the *status quo*. In these cases (and in many others, too), there is a clearly perceived need that funds should be allocated not according to present, but to potential costs, i.e. that priority should be given to needy or backward areas (*19*, *24*, *D*). This, however, proved to be an explosive issue—because of its implications for decentralization and for effectiveness.

Indeed, the most heated debates in the regional context were triggered by the problem of decentralization. According to some, the only means of decreasing regional inequalities is self-help, the mobilization of local resources, etc. (*7*, *9*, *13*, *D*). This is also the way to make people interested in education, because then they can decide what (local) education should be about (*9*, *10*) and what place education should occupy in local life (*13*). At the same time, a deliberate (central) redistributional strategy is questioned on the grounds that it is conducive to waste, because local needs are different (*26*) or because efficiency may be threatened by it (*13*, *D*).

Decentralized decision-making is largely accepted as a generous idea (*D*), and the mobilization of local resources as a theoretically sound strategy. Nevertheless, the following problems are raised:

The slogan of self-help may become an alibi for the centre for *not* doing anything (*D*).

If self-government is not combined with a centrally operated equalization of resources, then regional inequalities cannot but increase. Even without outright decentralization, the increase of inequalities is likely to occur because stronger regions exert a greater pressure on central bodies. Hence, deliberate central redistribution seems to be essential (*3*, *5*, *9*, *12*).

Local decision-making may not be as democratic as it sounds. It may be distorted in favour of the strongest local interest-groups (*10*, *D*), or may become rather authoritarian (*D*). Also, the competence of local leaders may be lacking (*19*, *D*).

The evolution of local power centres threatens national integration.

The arguments seem to lead the majority to a kind of compromise. In this view, the decentralization of decision-making and the mobilization of local resources are essential features of a democratic development, but, while large regional inequalities exist, some kind of central control and central redistribution of resources cannot be avoided. Or, as the authors of one paper (*3*) put it: 'The strategy of mobilizing local resources is not a panacea. It raises delicate problems of finding a just equilibrium between the dynamism and unequal capacities of different regions on the one hand and the regulating and compensating action of the central authorities on the other.'

Strategies for refinancing education[1]

When analysing the present allocation of resources, many observers reached the conclusion that funds were misused mainly because of free higher education. This policy led both to an excess of demand for higher education (which means an over-production of degrees) and to social injustices, because the central funds allocated to higher education were mainly used by economically, socially and culturally better-off groups.

The proposed remedial strategy is a new scheme to finance higher education, essentially by introducing fees, or loans (*2*, *13*, *25*, *26*, *D*). Since it is clear for the spokesmen of this policy that fee-paying would eliminate the worse-off groups from higher education (and render the social composition of the student body even more uneven), they propose to complete the scheme by generous scholarships, and also to graduate the fees according to the ability to pay (*2*, *25*). This step is also seen by some as depressing private rates of return, and hence as a means of curbing the present demand. Also, it is stressed that the new measure is an important element of an income policy which is redistributive. Obviously enough, arguments against this plan arose only during the discussions, but they were among the most heated around this issue. The main counter-arguments may be subsumed as follows:

Fee-paying in education cannot be seen as an element of general incomes policy, since it redistributes incomes only among those who have children (and these families usually do not belong to the highest income groups if per capita income is considered).

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[1] Cf. 'The Allocation of Educational Funds', pages 27-28 above.

The decrease in the rates of return is rather doubtful, because it implies that the new scheme will not affect earnings. It is, however, rather likely that the increased costs of higher education will constitute a new argument to press for higher salaries in the case of those who have higher school qualifications. Hence, the race for higher qualifications will not weaken, and, at the same time, the social cleavage between more and less educated persons will grow.

A special new inequality will be created between those who—because they were less well-off—asked for loans and those who did not need the loans (if loans are used instead of scholarships). Namely, their salaries will differ for long because of the obligation to repay the loan.

The scheme does not take account of existing socio-cultural obstacles, i.e. of the fact that long-term rationality is a socially conditioned ability. Social self-elimination is strong even if higher studies are free and encouraged by all means. It may be considered certain that the rates of continuing studies will be socially even more differentiated if fees are introduced.

In some LDCs the per capita costs of higher education are so high (for reasons which have not been analysed in sufficient detail) that only the richest few can afford to pay for it. Hence (if higher education is to be continued) the others will be asked to cover only a minor part of the costs. The overall reduction of costs will then be insignificant, but the assessment of the ability to pay may be quite expensive.

As in another context, it was pointed out in this case that it is practically impossible to go against a world mood. Free education at all levels (even if paralleled by fee-paying private solutions) has been considered for long as an important victory in the democratization of education. To revoke this attainment would be a defeat in itself and might have serious implications for other democratic achievements.

Nevertheless, the excessive costs of education undoubtedly create difficulties. Hence, some of the spokesmen for one of the global strategies—the integration of work and learning—stressed that this project enabled the schools to participate in production, and thus to cover part or whole of the costs of the schools. The conditions of self-financing were, however, not discussed in detail.

Strategies concerning between-school differences[1]

The lower quality of slum or rural schools is handled mainly through regional redistribution. One special strategy—that of Tanzania to send the best teachers to the most backward regions—merits attention because it tries to handle the qualitative difference directly (*5*).

The parallelism of public and private networks—where it exists—is usually taken for granted, and does not seem to call for special strategies. The same holds for an 'élite' network, where it exists (whether private or public). There was only one strategic proposal, according to which LDCs are in special need of an élite secondary channel, with a clientele selected by means of national competitive examinations (*13*).

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[1] Cf. 'Differences Between the Schools', pages 28-29 above.

The issue of integration or segregation rarely becomes explicit when one speaks about strategies. Because of the side-effects of the move towards integration (see page 00 above), it is suggested that 'segregated institutions may be temporarily needed to build up the identity and the bargaining strength of the weaker parties' (*10*). It is, however, not clear whether this strategy of a temporary segregation should be applied in the case of all types of handicapped groups, nor are the conditions of integration or segregation clearly specified.

Strategies to render school relevant[1]

The problem of the relevance of the school, and of its adjustment to its surroundings, was a live issue. Adjustment has some (seemingly) formal aspects, but they are not without importance. The adjustment of school working hours and vacations to rural working conditions is an instance (e.g. *9*). The main point is, however, the relevance of the curriculum.

The strategies involved are varied. Participatory surveys are proposed through which villagers may arrive at their own definition of their educational needs (*23*). Because of the contradiction between local needs and universal standards in the case of national examinations, there are attempts to introduce internal assessments made by the individual schools (*24*). The nodal problem is, however, how to teach locally needed knowledge and skills without creating a second-rate network with curtailed opportunities of further learning in countries which are still predominantly rural. The two most elaborated examples (within the seminar sample) are offered by Cuba and Tanzania (*5*, *20*). In both cases the adjustment to local needs seems to go together with the enrichment of local needs themselves. (This is most consistently done in Cuba, where secondary education is also entirely decentralized.) Also, post-primary education seems to be based on an altered mode of selection wherein traditional 'academic' achievement is no longer the sole criterion.

These strategies raise new dilemmas which are discussed in depth in two papers (*3*, *5*). (There is the problem of how to maintain and measure non-academic achievement, how to avoid subjectivity and randomness in selection, etc.)

Strategies of compensation and selection [2]

Compensatory education as such was hardly mentioned. In a way this is connected with the specificities of LDCs. If the majority are 'handicapped', 'compensation' is almost devoid of sense, or better, it has to be grasped in the form of curriculum relevance (which is what is done).

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[1] Cf. 'The Relevance of Educational Knowledge', pages 29-30 above.

[2] Cf. 'Mechanisms of Selection', pages 30-31 in part, above.

Nevertheless, at the level of post-primary education, the necessity of selection raises the problem of how to assure at least some degree of social equity: how to assure at least some chances for educationally disadvantaged groups. The strategy of altering the criteria by introducing non-academic ones *(3,5)* has already been mentioned. The other, more traditional method is to maintain the old academic standards, but to introduce positive discrimination in favour of some groups or individuals. Some of the negative side-effects—the humiliation following labelling, or the difficulties of assessing 'needs' (*9*, *13*, *D*) —have already been mentioned. One practical problem merits more attention. It was emphasized that positive discrimination applied during the process of selection (such as e.g. the lowering of the standards of admission in the case of those whom the policy wants to favour) is not sufficient in itself. If there is no sustained educational and economic help, the disadvantages continue to persist and they endanger the continuation of studies *(9)*.

Strategies attempting to counteract inequalities stemming from education[1]

In this case there are hardly any direct strategies. If unequal schooling has a negative impact on social inequalities in general, then the within-school problems have to be solved, and these require educational strategies (which have been already discussed). A case in point is unemployment. Inasmuch as unemployment is due to over-education, a better match of skills taught and the requirements of the labour market may ease the problem. (If, however, the cause–effect relation is not well understood, then the remedy may not work.) The same holds for women: inasmuch as their disadvantaged situation on the labour market is due to the effects of school positive discrimination in favour of girls' education may help. Experience, however, shows that education is just one factor of sexual inequality and, what is more, that the educational inequality of women stems from the same sources as their overall unequal situation. The more general (non-educational) strategies were, however, outside the sphere of competence of the seminar.

The only case in which an out-of-school strategy was mentioned to reduce inequalities in earnings was the strategy of de-linking earnings and education. The drawbacks of this strategy and the limits of its feasibility have already been pointed out. One may add if in some socialist countries the relation between education and earnings has been weakened, this is due more to the altered social relations in general than than to a deliberate attempt to de-link.

The presentation of the various strategies would have been much more meaningful if we could have presented at the same time the results of any particular policy measure. This balance-sheet is, unfortunately, lacking, because the background information was not sufficient. The concluding remarks are, therefore, rather impressionistic.

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[1] Cf. 'The Impact of Schooling on Social Inequalities, pages 31-34 above.

It is probably true that a global, all-round school reform is conceivable only under special social and historical circumstances, when not only the educational system, but the whole social fabric is on the move. Otherwise only piecemeal reforms may be implemented.

Both global and partial reforms may have unwanted side-effects, or, better, may create or at least render visible dilemmas of social development. However, it is much more difficult to assure the consistency of piecemeal reforms than those of a global approach. The partial solutions are, more often than not, pressed for by different interest groups.

In a way one may say that as soon as a problem is perceived, a remedy to cope with it is sought after. Yet obviously and inevitably, the various problems are differently perceived by different people or groups of people: even the same underlying problem may be apprehended in different ways by people who are affected in varying ways and to a different extent by it. In the last analysis, then, the implementation of the reforms is the result of bargains and compromises, so they may lead to diverging or even opposed consequences.

The educational system does not exist in a vacuum. The social mechanisms governing social life at large permeate the school. It is therefore practically impossible to base the educational process on principles which are at variance with those at work outside the school. Thus, for instance, if individual competition and a 'meritocratic' and hierarchic reward system characterize social life in general, and 'merit' is understood in a special, socially non-neutral way, then it is hardly conceivable that a school life may be built up that is based on relations of solidarity and equality, on a more collectivistic conception of achievement or on a different conception of merit. The acceptance of general social norms and mechanisms may be postponed for some time. (For example, individual assessment based on academic criteria may be omitted in the first forms; or local needs and corresponding skills may be presented for a while as of equal value with other needs and skills.) But the adjustment has to take place at last. Otherwise the confrontation of school-leavers with reality inevitably leads to individual failures and social tensions.

This does not mean that educational strategies corresponding to less competitive or less unequal social relations are entirely useless. They may have long-term effects (about which we know practically nothing) or they may render school life more pleasant in the immediate present. But planners have to reckon with the limits of the change induced by these strategies.

The interrelations between school and social structure have some other implications, which have been made explicit by the participants. Thus, because of the known limitations of educational reforms, due to a large extent to structural causes, 'planning for the reduction of regional—or other—disparities does have to address basic structural issues such as, for example, income distribution and, more generally, does not make any sense unless it begins by understanding the underlying causes and conditions of inequalities' (*5*). This, ultimately, means that 'the reduction of disparities in school development cannot be separated from a reduction of disparities in development. Merely to try to give equal training possibilities to children is not an aim in itself. It is also necessary to attend to the problem of knowing whether they will have the same possibilities of benefiting from this training economically, socially, culturally and even politically' (*3*).

III. Research proposals

The research propositions are regrouped in two main sections. The first presents research relating to educational matters, the second that connected with problems of employment or life chances in general. Otherwise the texts follow almost verbatim the documents quoted (see Appendix for the full list of papers).

1. Research on education

Paper 2

(*page 17*) 'After a decade of concern about the distributional effects of educational policies in developing countries, it seems surprising to me that so little has been accomplished in this area of fiscal equity. If there is any information we desperately need, it is information on the distribution of tax costs and educational subsidies received by families in different income categories in LDCs. It would also be highly desirable to launch some longitudinal studies or at least time-series investigations of the patterns of social mobility in developing countries.'

(*page 20*) More research is needed on the social class composition of students in higher education: 'It is only by gathering this information that we can tell what the problems are in identifying the incomes of students' families for purposes of devising income-contingent scholarship programmes and student loan schemes.'

Paper 3

(*pages 65–66*) 'The time has certainly come to support attempts at quantitative analysis through qualitative research, this being the only type of research which is capable of providing a guide to the choice of variables and in the interpretation of results. Such analysis would presuppose that schools would from now on be looked at not only from the outside and from a distance, but they would also be explored from the inside and through internal participation. . . . It is necessary to explore how (previous) projects (in this area) can be expanded, and particularly how the two approaches—qualitative and quantitative—can be better integrated in the future.'

Paper 4

(*page 37*) 'The assessment of the Experimental World Literacy Programme clearly points out that a major hindrance to the development of literacy in many countries is the failure to foster literacy in the mother tongue. . . . In this situation, the comparative study of experiences by different countries in the field of planning for minority language education appears to be a fruitful endeavour which should be of great benefit in deriving new approaches to solving the problem of inter-group inequalities.'

Paper 5

(*pages 93–94*) 'We have . . . emphasized the importance of selection mechanisms to the issue of regional equity. . . . A particular need is research relating to the content of examinations and the validity of various alternative types of selection. . . .'

(*page 94*) 'A second and complementary research priority is for studies which document the process and criteria of individual advancement from the standpoint of both performance and equity.'

(*page 94*) 'Thirdly, in view of the evidence on the effect of school quality on individual performance and hence regional equity . . . this is an important area for research. . . . There is a corresponding need for such (macro-level) approaches to be supplemented by small-scale assessments of individual schools and communities for an understanding of what we mean by the quality which is produced and the kind of achievement which is recorded in national examinations.'

Paper 10

(*page 23*) 'Formal integration, without the necessary changes in value structures, justifies claims for segregated defence mechanisms for the weaker groups. In other words, we have to learn the social techniques needed to minimize exploitation in organizational and institutional setting. There is no doubt that such an aim offers a tremendous potential for relevant research.'

Paper 26

(*page 51*) 'Investigate the impact of specific family characteristics on the student's educational achievement.'

(*page 51*) 'Continue documenting the extent to which universal free education is socially inequitable.'

(*page 52*) 'Focus research towards the satisfaction of the basic needs end of the educational and income distribution.'

(*page 52*) 'Investigate the relative compensatory power of specific educational policies for adverse exogenous factors' (such as sex, genetic ability, father's occupation).

Paper 28

(*page 23*) 'While several examples of efforts to develop a system of education and training designed to lead to a more democratic and humane work environment have been given [in the paper], they are superficial. There has been an explosion of activity [over] the past ten years in participatory management, especially in Europe and North America. However, the literature has not kept up with the pace of this activity. This is a fertile area of future research.'

Paper 32

(*page 42*) 'The school enrolment and attendance patterns of rural girls need investigating, to see to what extent they drop out and for what reason.'

(*page 42*) (The original proposal related to Iran, but it has larger implications:) 'The extent of the posting of Literacy Corps female teachers in rural areas needs investigating. These are normally well-educated girls, but it is believed that they mostly work in urban areas. What steps can be taken to alter this pattern ?'

From the report of Working group 2

(*page 6*) (There should be) 'A closer and more systematic look at the effects of exam policies on the maintenance and promotion of inequalities. This area of research could include investigations on alternative policies regarding recruitment and selection and their consequences.'

(*page 6*) 'Studies of the learning retention curve—what is learned and what is retained from different types of education—may help to distinguish what is important from what is irrelevant in schooling and examinations.'

(*page 6*) 'Research into disparities between the sexes could usefully concentrate upon identifying the sets of social conditions and other factors which facilitate or retard enhanced equality.'

(*page 6*) 'Investigation into language as a factor in inequalities on a regional and social class basis. Problems of multilingual societies as well as unilingual societies (where access to the dialect and, even, accent of the élite group are necessary for mobility) could be profitably studied.'

(*page 6*) 'Investigation into the relationships (if any) between the cost of schooling and its quality, with consideration of the meaning of quality and particular attention to the role and training of teachers.'

(*page 6*) 'Investigation into reasons why certain groups do not use, or even reject, the types of education which are available to them.'

(*page 6*) 'A review of countries that have demonstrated sustained commitment to reducing inequalities in education will help us to understand what conditions give rise to that commitment.'

2. Research on employment

Paper 17 (*page 35*) It would be useful to elaborate a model 'to estimate the likely changes in recruitment patterns, given our knowledge of the future of education supply. The data needed to work on this model are, in addition to labour survey and censuses, statistics on education planning. . . .'

In order to refine the findings on the role of education concerning access to various occupations, we need to be able to answer very specific questions regarding 'which diploma or graduation helps entering into which occupation and how fast'. (Information may be derived from surveys if asking questions about the 'demands of the employer'. The files of the employment services may also be useful.)

(*page 36*) 'In order to assess more carefully the comparative impacts of systems of training (e.g. on-the-job, technical-vocational, informal training, etc.), we need to go into career analyses.' (Data may be derived from: training institutions; job histories; workers' files; and some relevant questions may be added to employers' surveys.)

Paper 22 (*page 53*) 'Planners ought to have a method for assessing the equalizing impact of education on economic returns as well as to rank different educational strategies according to their equalization potential.'

The purpose of this paper (*22*) was to set out a methodology for carrying out such analyses, while illustrating them with a specific application. The focus of the methodology was the use of a human-capital accounting procedure that utilized expected earnings streams to estimate human-capital values. This type of research is recommended.

Paper 26

(*page 50*) 'Investigate the relationship between given curricula types and the labour market performance of graduates.'

(*page 51*) 'Investigate the way specific levels and kinds of education relate to the economic performance of the self-employed.'

(*page 52*) 'Experiment with simulations of the effects of particular policies on the components of a social welfare function.'

Paper 32

(*page 43*) 'Employment of urban females in production occupations has not noticeably increased [in Iran since 1966, but the problem is valid in other LDCs, too], and it would be useful to know the reasons why... More needs to be known about the reasons why so few of the less educated girls ever enter the labour force.'

(*page 44*) 'Similarly, too little is known about the increases in employment in agricultural and production occupations among rural females. How many of these females can be considered as fully employed, and what levels of income do they derive from their activities?

'Has land reform been a factor in increasing rural female employment, as small landholders (male) migrated from the land to work in cities?'

From the report of Working group 2

(*page 6*) (There should be an) 'Investigation into ways to effect a de-linking of educational attainment and (almost automatic) access to positions of power and privilege, along with the consequences of such policies. National case studies could be useful and instructive.'

Some afterthoughts

These afterthoughts come from an outsider—an outsider, at least, to the problems of developing countries. Having made a superficial contact with, or having acquired a superficial knowledge about, the problems of these countries, some questions inevitably come to the fore:

1. It is striking to see that there is practically no case in which the experts were in agreement as to its interpretation or evaluation. Even seemingly simple issues, about which evidence has been systematically accumulated, are interpreted in different, often contradictory ways. This happens in the case of the relation between education and economic growth, between educational growth and equality, between education and employment, between education and earnings, between regional inequality and decentralization—and so on.

The lack of consensus may be for various reasons, which needed to be investigated in themselves. It may be assumed, however, that one of these reasons is the difference in the *Weltanschauung*, the ideological position of the parties involved. While this difference cannot be eliminated, at least its implications should be made explicit.

Another reason may be that the current evidence is in itself contradictory, inasmuch as a relation which holds for one country may not hold for another. For the time being, there are no attempts systematically to explore this issue. One way of exploring it is to ask a question about the homogeneity or uniformity of so-called LDC countries. (See question 2 below.)

A third reason (related to question 1) may be—and question 3 hereafter is triggered by this uncertainty—that historical explanations are used in either a too mechanistic or too flexible way, that history itself is interpreted at the convenience of the researcher. While there is no way to avoid the subjective (or ideological) utilization of historical evidence, more awareness about the problem itself could not be harmful.

2. Is it, indeed, an adequate approach in educational matters to speak about LDCs, or developing countries, or Third World countries, as if they formed a homogeneous group? While the LDC category, or even labelling, may be useful in international politics (or in international financial matters), it is a doubtful category in scientific investigations about social, economic or educational matters. Differences between LDCs may be as great or greater than between some LDCs and some other countries from the First or the Second World. The between-country differences are, obviously, multidimensional. They may be economic, cultural, religious, political or of any other type, and the relations between these dimensions may also vary. Hence, it should be possible to work out meaningful classifications for LDCs. It may well be that different scientific aims would require different classifications. Thus for economic purposes LDCs may be grouped according to the level of per capita GNP, or according to the role of agriculture, or again according to the role of the market, etc.—or all these together. In order to elaborate a meaningful classification for educational purposes, one has probably to identify the social factors which have the largest impact on the educational system and its development potential (such as the amount of economic, social and regional inequalities, the role of religious and other cultural traditions, the main mechanisms of motivation, the relative role of market and plan in social life, etc.). Also, one has to take into account the current level of development in education itself (literacy rates, etc.).

It is highly probable that both the analysis of educational problems and the elaboration of possible and relevant strategies could profit from such a classification of LDCs.

3. There is a growing awareness among social scientists that the historical dimension can practically never be ignored. Also, there are frequent references to 'history'. But, the handling of history seems to be rather arbitrary: one often interprets historical evidence in a way which proves one's point, without knowing what would be the real historical lessons to be learned. Two examples may be cited here.

First, LDCs have often been accused of spending too much on higher education on grounds that ICs, when they were at the same stage of economic development, had many fewer students in higher education (or in its technical branches). Now, several questions arise here. For instance: if there is a new way to form experts which is more effective than the old way (while the old way is dying out), is it not 'normal' to take over this new way, even if the social context is different? Or: it may be affirmed on historical grounds that each integrated society needs some kind of 'intelligentsia', the members of which are assigned the task of handling, producing and reproducing the symbolic aspects of the given social and cultural life. This layer may be smaller or larger; under 'ideal' conditions, if there are no class-cleavages and no domination, symbolic or otherwise, it may even coincide with the whole population. But it has to be formed in some way, by some institution (the tribe, the family, the Church, the school). It seems that in the present conditions of many LDCs, when the traditional channels are disintegrating, the school is probably the main instrument in this field (and its importance is enhanced if one thinks in terms of a 'national intelligentsia' in the case of new nations).

Second, it is frequently affirmed that the objective of equality is anachronistic in LDCs. The historical evidence relating to ICs shows that their economic and social development was accompanied by various social and economic inequalities. Hence, it is concluded that the disintegration of the archaic forms of social life and the economic development taking place on this foundation will inevitably lead to growing inequalities (in income distribution, in educational achievements, in occupational hierarchies, etc.).

One has to add that the inequalities in question inflicted enormous sufferings in the countries which later became ICs, first (usually) on the peasantry, later on the newly constituted working class as a whole, and then on a 'subproletariat', i.e. a fraction of the working class which seems to become structurally marginal. In other words, different social groups paid a tremendous price in order to assure 'global' social and economic development, the fruits of which were unequally distributed.

The view that inequalities will inevitably grow in LDCs transfers historical evidence in a quasi-mechanical way to these countries. One ought to ask, then, is there really no other, alternative path to 'development'? Is it inevitable that some pay the price and some others enjoy its counterpart? Or is this essentially the developmental pattern geared by the so-called 'self-regulating market'? If the latter is the case, then it ought to be possible to find patterns of development which may perhaps slow down the rhythm of progress (in an economic sense), but save the majority from some sufferings, some injustices and some inequalities.

On the whole it seems to me that researches along the lines suggested by these 'afterthoughts' may lead perhaps not to an enhanced consensus, but at least to a clearer understanding of why we fail to agree or even to understand each other's views, problems and opinions.

Appendix

List of documents of the seminar

1. S. A. K. Al Noban, 'The experience of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen', in *Inequalities in educational development: papers presented at an IIEP seminar*. Paris, IIEP, 1981.
2. M. Blaug, 'Thoughts on the distribution of schooling and the distribution of earnings in developing countries' (in this volume, see page 77).
3. G. Carron and Ta Ngoc C., *Reduction of regional disparities: the rôle of educational planning*. Paris, Unesco: IIEP, 1981.
4. S. Churchill, 'Inequalities between linguistic groups: costs and educational services for minority language groups', in *Inequalities in educational development: papers presented at an IIEP seminar*. Paris, IIEP, 1981.
5. D. Court and K. Kinyanjui, 'Development policy and educational opportunity: the experience of Kenya and Tanzania', in G. Carron and Ta Ngoc C. (eds.), *Regional disparities in educational development: diagnosis and policies for reduction*. Paris, Unesco: IIEP, 1980.
6. A. Damiba, 'Educational inequalities in Upper Volta', in *Inequalities in educational development: papers presented at an IIEP seminar*. Paris, IIEP, 1981.
7. R. De Souza, 'The new school and policy to reduce inequality in the People's Republic of Benin', in *Inequalities in educational development: papers presented at an IIEP seminar*. Paris, IIEP, 1981.
8. A. Desta, 'Schooling and inequality in pre-revolutionary Ethiopia', in *Inequalities in educational development: papers presented at an IIEP seminar*. Paris, IIEP, 1981.
9. A. C. Deve Gowda, 'Educational inequalities between rural and urban areas', in *Inequalities in educational development: papers presented at an IIEP seminar*. Paris, IIEP, 1981.
10. K. Eide, 'Some key problems of equality in education' (in this volume, see page 95).
11. L. Emmerij, 'Inequalities in education and inequalities in employment' (in this volume, see page 129).
12. Z. Ferge, E. Havasi and J. Szalai, 'Regional disparities and educational development in Hungary', in G. Carron and Ta Ngoc C. (eds.), *Regional disparities in educational development: a controversial issue*. Paris, Unesco: IIEP, 1980.
13. P. Foster, 'Regional disparities in educational development: some critical observations', in G. Carron and Ta Ngoc C. (eds.), *Regional disparities in educational development: a controversial issue*. Paris, Unesco: IIEP, 1980.
14. P. Furter, 'The recent development of education: regional diversity or reduction of

inequalities?', in G. Carron and Ta Ngoc C. (eds.), *Regional disparities in educational development: a controversial issue.* Paris, Unesco: IIEP, 1980.

15. J. GALTUNG, 'Educational disparities, world politics and the new international economic order', in *Inequalities in educational development: papers presented at an IIEP seminar.* Paris, IIEP, 1981.
16. J. HALLAK, 'Education and work in Indonesia', in J. Hallak and F. Caillods (eds.), *Education, work and employment—I: education, training and access to the labour market.* Paris, Unesco: IIEP, 1980.
17. J. HALLAK and J. VERSLUIS, 'Recruitment patterns and labour market analysis: some examples and suggestions for further research', in *Inequalities in educational development: papers presented at an IIEP seminar.* Paris, IIEP, 1981.
18. G. S. HAULE, 'Towards reducing educational inequalities in Zanzibar', in *Inequalities in educational development: papers presented at an IIEP seminar.* Paris, IIEP, 1981.
19. W. HENEVELD, 'The distribution of resources for educational expansion in East Java', in *Inequalities in educational development: papers presented at an IIEP seminar.* Paris, IIEP, 1981.
20. HERRERA HERNÁNDEZ, 'Notes on educational policy and the elimination of inequalities in access to education in Cuba', in *Inequalities in educational development: papers presented at an IIEP seminar.* Paris, IIEP, 1981.
21. T. HUSÉN, 'Second thoughts on equality in education' (in this volume, see page 57).
22. H. M. LEVIN, 'Assessing the equalization potential of education', in *Inequalities in educational development: papers presented at an IIEP seminar.* Paris, IIEP, 1981.
23. S. LOURIÉ, 'Inequalities in education in rural Guatemala', in *Inequalities in educational development: papers presented at an IIEP seminar.* Paris, IIEP, 1981.
24. K. A. MEESOOK, 'Problems of educational inequalities in Thailand', in *Inequalities in educational development: papers presented at an IIEP seminar.* Paris, IIEP, 1981.
25. F. ORIVEL, 'Fresh obstacles facing policies aimed at reducing educational inequalities' (in this volume, see page 111).
26. G. PSACHAROPOULOS, 'Inequalities in education and employment', in *Inequalities in educational development: papers presented at an IIEP seminar.* Paris, IIEP, 1981.
27. S. RASSEKH, 'Education and employment inequalities in Iran', in *Inequalities in educational development: papers presented at an IIEP seminar.* Paris, IIEP, 1981.
28. J. SIMMONS and A. AKINGBA, 'Education and training for a transition to workplace democracy: theory and illustrations', in *Inequalities in educational development: papers presented at an IIEP seminar.* Paris, IIEP, 1981.
29. A. C. SMOCK, 'Sex differences in educational opportunity and employment in six countries', in *Inequalities in educational development: papers presented at an IIEP seminar.* Paris, IIEP, 1981.
30. K. SUDAPRASERT, V. TUNSIR and TA NGOC C., 'Regional disparities in the development of education in Thailand', in G. Carron and Ta Ngoc C. (eds.), *Regional disparities in educational development: diagnosis and policies for reduction.* Paris, Unesco: IIEP, 1980.
31. THAI BINH, 'Half-study–half-work schools in the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam', in *Inequalities in educational development: papers presented at an IIEP seminar.* Paris, IIEP, 1981.
32. A. C. R. WHEELER, 'An analysis of the changing disparities in female access to education and employment in Iran during the intercensal period, 1966–76', in *Inequalities in educational development: papers presented at an IIEP seminar.* Paris, IIEP, 1981.

Second thoughts on equality in education

Torsten Husén

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Introduction

In the 1960s educators began to be obsessed by problems of equality in education. The liberal quest for equality of opportunity entered upon a euphoric period. The seemingly unlimited resources put at the disposal of those in educational research and practice who wanted to do something also served as a stimulant. Surveys were conducted and experimental programmes in compensatory and remedial education were launched. There was a strong belief in what education, given the needed resources, could do in improving society.

But at the very peak of its dazzling success, in the euphoric moment of being conceived of as the prime instrument of social progress and prosperity, doubts began to be raised and serious criticisms levelled. The school as an institution came under heavy attack from both left and right. Second thoughts and criticism also emerged with regard to something that had so far been regarded as an unassailable credo, namely equality of educational opportunity.

It would seem rather *passé* to deal with problems of equality in education that have been in the focus of educational debate since the Coleman (1966) survey and fuelled by Jencks' (1972) re-analyses published a few years later. But I feel that time has come to step back and try to account for some of the results of the debate. This is what I am pretentious enough to do in a somewhat rhapsodic way. In the light of recent thinking and research there are social scientists who have begun to have second thoughts about the matter.

Conservative critics maintain that due consideration to socio-biological realities has not been given and that the educational system is not there primarily to bring about equality. On the contrary, it is there to create distinctions. The liberals have to their regret discovered that their policy formulas to bring about a better balance between social strata in participation in advanced education have been far from working as well as they anticipated. Neo-Marxist critics maintain and have at least in this country tried to show that schooling in the capitalist society serves the interests of the ruling class and is geared to reproduce already existing class differences.

Let me go back to the mid-eighteenth century and begin with Horace Mann as a typical example of eighteenth-century optimism. He considered the common public school to hold promise of providing equality of opportunity and of shaping a society unaffected by social and economic inequalities. The school for children from all walks of life would serve as 'a great equalizer of the conditions of men, the balance wheel of the social machinery . . .'. It would 'do better than disarm the poor of their hostility toward the rich. It prevents being poor . . .' (quoted from Hechinger, 1975). Apart from being an equalizer, the school was seen as a prime instrument for individuals born in humble circumstances to move up the social ladder. Everybody should be given equal opportunity to achieve and to be promoted, provided he had the talent and the energy to go ahead. The school that selects and prepares young people for the different positions in society was assumed to perform these functions in a spirit of justice and impartiality. Its selective function was assumed to occur strictly according to proven merits and not to social background, sex or race. The big individual differences in income, wealth and power that after all are highly conspicuous in a society that has realized the meritocratic principles, to a large extent reflect innate differences in ability to go ahead in life. Thus, in *one* sense a meritocratic society is 'classless': it provides in principle every person equal opportunity to become prosperous and influential.

The liberal vision of equal opportunity prevailed in most western industrial countries well into the late 1960s. The rapid expansion of the educational systems in the 1950s and 1960s was due to two main circumstances. The rising standard of living stimulated a social demand for education. The conception of education as a capital investment with a high rate of return both to the individual and to society provided the justification for the education sector in the late 1950s and during the 1960s to be allowed to grow at twice the rate of growth of the economy. Policy-makers were caught in a kind of equality euphoria. By removing economic barriers and making more places available in upper secondary and higher education and by increasing the length of attendance in the common school, ideal conditions could be created to implement the vision of equal opportunity, where everybody had access to the kind and amount of education that suited his inborn capacity.

The late 1960s, not least the traumatic upheaval of 1968, marked a turning-point. The power of the formal school system to serve as an equalizer was brought into question by participation studies conducted during the 1960s in the OECD countries (OECD, 1970). Furthermore, the assumption that greater equalization of educational opportunities would in its wake have enhanced equalization of life chances turned out to be much less valid than the optimists had anticipated. In his keynote address to the OECD Conference in 1970 on Policies for Educational Growth the Swedish Minister of Education had the following to say about education as a promoter of social change (OECD, 1971, p. 69):

> It is possible that we have been too optimistic, particularly perhaps concerning the time it takes to bring about changes. On the other hand, it is hardly possible to change society only through education. To equalize educational opportunities without influencing working conditions, the setting of wage rates, etc. in other ways, would easily become an empty gesture. The reforms in educational policy must go together with reforms in other fields: labour market policy, economic policy, social policy, fiscal policy, etc.

Referring to the optimistic statements made during the first OECD Policy Conference on Education in Washington, D.C. in 1961, Charles Frankel and A. H. Halsey in their summary report from the 1970 Conference conclude (ibid., p. 14):

> Too much has been claimed for the power of educational systems as instruments for wholesale reform of societies which are characteristically hierarchical in their distribution of chances in life as between races, classes, the sexes and as between metropolitan/suburban and provincial/rural populations. The typical history of educational expansion in the 1950s and the 1960s for the OECD countries can be represented by a graph of inequality between the above-mentioned social categories which has shifted markedly upwards without changing its slope. In other words, relative chances have not altered materially despite expansion.

In his Preface to Husén (1972) the director of the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI), James R. Gass, points out that policies that derive from the notion of making access opportunities formally equal have proved to have a 'disappointingly limited impact'. The reappraisal inspired by the at least partial failure of previous policies would have to consider measures that go beyond the removal of entrance 'obstacles to positive political measures of compensation and support, with the ultimate aim of a more equal social outcome' (op. cit. p. 3).

The whole debate on equalization of life chances, and on educational opportunities in particular, was still in the early 1960s rather unsophisticated, which explained why it was conceived of only as a matter of simply removing social, economic and geographical obstacles to access to further education. During the next decade a much higher level of sophistication was achieved mainly due to three circumstances.

First, the basic problem of how individual differences in educability emerge and develop became the focus of an intensive controversy in the wake of the famous Jensen (1969) article in the *Harvard Educational Review* and was further analysed and empirically studied. Benjamin Bloom (1976) has questioned certain basic notions on how, for instance, individual differences are distributed, to the extent of regarding them as 'a vanishing point' in organizing classroom work.

Second, a series of important surveys were made of how differences of educational attainments were related to socio-cultural background: by their policy-orientation these surveys inspired a debate that brought up basic technical as well as theoretical problems (Coleman *et al.*, 1966; Plowden, 1967; IEA, 1967–76; and Jencks *et al.*, 1972). The studies by Jencks and his associates of the development of inequalities in life chances and the IEA cross-cultural investigations of the relative importance of home and school in accounting for differences between students and school in, for instance, reading and science achievements deserve to be mentioned here.

Third, the very concept of equality, for instance equality of opportunity versus equality of results, became the subject of thorough philosophical analysis. Before the end of the 1960s Coleman (1966) was the only one among educational researchers who had attempted to clarify the concept. But after that a more deepened and faceted debate on equality emerged with contributions from Rawls (1971), Frankel (1973) and others.

In what follows we shall comment on these three aspects of the setting in which the issue of equality is now conceived.

How differences in educational attainments occur

The nature–nurture problem was for a long time regarded mainly as an aloof, academic issue and had almost no repercussions on the general public. That does not mean that the problem had no policy implications. On the contrary, it had strongly influenced eugenic policy; for instance, legislation on sterilization of persons with low IQ or on setting immigration quotas in the United States in the early 1920s (Cronbach, 1973). But until the late 1960s the matter was treated in academic aloofness and did not cause the emotional outburst that followed in the wake of the Jensen (1969) article in the *Harvard Educational Review* or Herrnstein's later (1971) article on IQ in the *Atlantic Monthly*.

In her presidential address to the Division of General Psychology of the American Psychological Association Anne Anastasi (1958) pointed out that the task that lay ahead for research in the area of heredity–environment was to explore the *modus operandi* of genetic and environmental factors. They cannot, as has been assumed by most researchers in the field, be regarded as acting in an additive way. Instead, the two sets of factors interact along a continuum of directness. Anastasi cites Dobzhansky, a leading geneticist, who advances a striking illustration of how interaction can take place. Suppose that all persons with blood group AB are considered to be aristocrats while those with blood group O are considered inferior and suited only for menial labour, then blood-group genes will in the course of time artificially become 'determiners' of certain types of behaviour. A parallel example from the real world is the effect of discrimination against a particular social class or ethnic group. In the long run this will result in group differences which are correlated with genetic background without being causally affected by them.

Certain basic circumstances have usually been ignored. In the first place, there is no indication that cognitive behaviour of the type assessed by intelligence tests is monogenic. Second, endeavours to link genetic material, once identified, with concrete cognitive behaviour, have not yet begun. Third, the concept of 'heritability', which has played a key role in the Jensen debate, does not apply to individuals but is, as pointed out by Dobzhansky, a characteristic of a population not of a particular individual. Estimates of heritability, in the event that they are valid, which in itself is a doubtful proposition, are applicable only to the particular

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population studied by particular instruments at a particular point in time. This is a special case of the general principle that heredity is not a status but a *process*. Furthermore, in the method employed by Burt, Jensen and others, who contend that the larger portion of individual differences is attributable to genetic factors, the research findings apply only to individual differences which are studied by means of identical twins, whereas policy-makers are primarily interested in group differences which are more readily manipulated by policy measures.

The polarization that in the early 1970s occurred in the scholarly world with regard to the heredity–environment issue could hardly have been predicted by the late 1950s. But a decade later the political development had added new dimensions of applicability to a research field that previously had been regarded as consisting of rather aloof and 'pure' academic exercises. Studies of the relative importance of heredity and environment were supposed to provide answers to such questions as, 'Is compensatory education worth while?' or 'Do ghetto children fail because of innate inadequacies or because of social handicaps?' An overriding problem was to what extent the education system could rectify social handicaps in lower-class children or among racial minorities.

Prior to the Jensen debate many social scientists had shown an almost euphoric optimism about the possibilities of a system of advanced mass education, an optimism that became only slightly affected by the criticism and quest for excellence that became vociferous in the wake of the Sputnik shock in the late 1950s. Robert Faris (1961), in a presidential address to the American Sociological Association, was a spokesman for this optimism. It does not suffice, he said, to have a 'limited stock of geniuses at the top of the productivity organization' (p. 836). By improving society one can also improve the conditions which promote the development of abilities. He further notes, that 'a society generates its level of ability, the upper limit of which is unknown and distant', and best of all, that the process of achieving that level is potentially subject to intentional control. The 'boom' in formal schooling could be seen as a 'potent instrument for raising the ability level of the population'. The nation was at present 'quietly lifting itself by the bootstraps to an important higher level of general ability' (p. 838).

The task of the educator is to bring about worthwhile changes in the behaviour of growing or grown-up individuals. Such changes are achieved by environmental and not by genetic means and are accessible to direct observation. Since, as pointed out above, no specific links between genes and concrete cognitive behaviour have been identified, the burden of proof as to how genetic factors act as restraints to educative efforts rests with the hereditarians and not with the environmentalists. Environmental influences on mental development are the only ones that can be directly observed and measured, with increasingly refined techniques developed within the behavioural sciences. What remains unexplained after the environmental influences have been assigned their 'share' could conditionally be referred to as genetic factors, after reasonable consideration has been given to measurement error and to theoretically important but unmeasured environmental factors.

The need to clarify conceptually the heredity–environment issue is of utmost importance since otherwise quite wrong policy implications might be drawn. It cannot be emphasized strongly enough that heredity is not a status, a kind of fixed point, but a process. The hereditary component of a personality trait, say scholastic ability, can only be inferred from a process of development that is *not directly accessible to observation and/or measurement.*

Dobzhansky (1973) has attempted to bridge the gap between social philosophy and biology in bringing out the policy implications with regard to equality of the heredity–environment issue. He stresses that equality should not be confused with identity. Equality is a social and not a biological concept.

Equality between various social, racial and ethnic groups has often been confused with equal representation. Over the last few decades extensive survey research has consistently found tremendous differences between upper and lower social strata in the portion of the relevant age group that has gone to upper-secondary school and university. Such imbalances provide ample justification to hypothesize that a large portion of talented youth of lower-class background does not get the opportunity to enter further education and therefore belongs to the 'ability reserve'. But one cannot therefore immediately jump to the conclusion that any imbalance, however small it may be, is entirely due to inequality of opportunity. Dobzhansky points out that a model of full representational equality between social classes implies that *all* cognitive characteristics are determined by home background and randomly distributed over social strata. But even if we assume that genetically determined intelligence has the same distribution in all social strata, we still have to consider the 'residual' factors that account for some 50 per cent of the differences in scholastic attainment and which have consistently been shown to be determined by home background, including such factors as parental education, verbal stimulation and motivational support. Individuals vary not only in their intellectual capacity but also in their ability to take advantage of opportunities offered to them. There is reason to assume that both these capacities to some extent are genetically conditioned.

Finally, equality has two aspects. It is usually conceived in terms of what has been described as social Darwinism: as the right to compete with everybody else for access through the formal educational system to the various social positions according to the same conditions. That is to say, everybody should have the right to strive and compete on equal terms. Second, equality should also be conceived of as the right to be treated differently according to one's particular abilities and interests. Different inherited capacities require different environments if they are to develop to the satisfaction of the individual. Equality of opportunity does not mean therefore identity of treatment.

The limited role of the school in the 'ecology of education'

Some thirty to forty years ago hopes were high on both sides of the Atlantic for what the school could do in what Counts referred to in 1932 as 'building a new social order'. After the First World War a reformist wave swept education in the industrialized world, under the auspices of, among others, the New Education Fellowship. The Progressive Education Association, in which Counts was playing a leading role, expected the school to assume increased responsibilities for the education of young people and for bringing about social reforms. Similar views were held by the politicians who were behind the main report of the Swedish 1946 School Commission, charged with a radical reform of the compulsory school system in the direction of comprehensivization (SOU, 1948):

> The main task of the school is to educate democratic human beings. . . . Only by means of free education can the school lay the foundations for a development of society shaped by the insight and free will of its citizens. . . . The school in a democratic society must . . . constitute a milieu for the free development of children. The individuality and the personal assets of the pupil ought not only to be considered and respected but should form the starting point for how instruction and education of the child is laid out. The work in the school ought to aim at promoting a free and harmonious development of all aspects of the personality of the pupil but should at the same time develop what is unique and special with him.

It would seem useful in this context to consider some important constraints on what the school can do and deal briefly with what Cremin (1976) refers to as the 'ecology of education'. Education in the first place cannot be identified with formal schooling only. Furthermore, non-formal education is occurring in the context of other educational institutions, such as the family and mass media, whose role and impact over a short period have changed considerably. The contribution of the family to the outcomes of formal schooling has been in the focus of interest among educational researchers and policy-makers on both sides of the Atlantic since the mid-1960s, when the strategy of compensatory education was developed. Parents, siblings and peers, as well as churches, libraries, museums, summer camps, factories, radio stations and television networks, relate to each other in what Cremin calls 'configurations of education'. Educational institutions and configurations have to be viewed in relation to each other and to 'the larger society that sustains them and is in turn affected by them . . .' (op. cit., p. 30).

Profound changes in the composition of the family have over the last few years taken place in the industrialized countries, changes that have had strong repercussions on its educative functions. In the first place, the average number of children per family has declined, a change that has been particularly drastic after the mid-1960s, when the pill began to have its impact. This unexpected demographic trend downwards has dramatically affected the demand for teachers. After a long period of shortage countries such as England, the Federal Republic of Germany and the United States now tend to have a surplus of teachers. The great majority of families have only one child or two children. The number of single-parent families has increased rapidly and so has the number of mothers working outside the home. For example, by 1955 in Stockholm only some 15 per cent of mothers living with their husbands and having children of primary-school age had full-time jobs outside the home. Two decades later their number had increased to almost 60 per cent. Three-generation families have almost disappeared. In recent years several countries have experienced a dramatic decline in birth rate that affects not only the ecology of their educational systems but also the enrolment pattern and the planning of teacher training.

All these changes in the ecology of education imply in some respects a broadening of the tasks of the school, but in other respects a narrowing of them. The school is supposed to take care of the children for an increased number of years during an increased part of the day. Its educative functions in a wide sense have been widened. But what about the traditional tasks of imparting certain cognitive skills: the three Rs and orientation knowledge? Relative to other institutions its role has been diminished. The school does not any longer, as was the case in the pre-industrial or neo-industrial society, possess a monopoly on imparting certain cognitive competencies. It has to compete with other institutions, such as the mass media. The out-of-school learning has gained in importance.

The survey research conducted after mid-1960s has given rise to a lively debate about whether 'school makes any difference'. The Coleman (1966) survey on equality of educational opportunity was commissioned by the United States Congress in order to evaluate the programmes launched to provide education to the handicapped and ethnic minorities. The survey conducted in England by the Plowden commission (HMSO, 1967) on 11-year-olds aimed at disentangling the relative influences of school and home on school attainments. Jencks (1972) and his associates re-analysed data set from other surveys in order to study the impact of IQ, home background and formal education on adult income. They concluded that the school is of only marginal importance in explaining differences in adult earnings. Finally, we could cite the IEA survey which comprised some twenty countries with students at three levels, 10-year-olds, 14-year-olds, and 18-year-olds respectively.

We shall not here enter upon a discussion of the highly intricate technical problems, not to mention the difficult interpretation problems, one encounters in studies of this kind. Suffice it to say that individual differences in educational attainments are consistently accounted for to a large extent by non-scholastic factors. The amount of variance explained by such factors varies of course between subject areas. Thus, a large portion of the variance in reading is accounted for by background, whereas in the case of performance in a foreign language only a small proportion is explained by background factors (Walker, 1976). This does not, however, justify the conclusion that the school 'does not make much difference'. Evidently, the laying off of the school would have catastrophic consequences in a highly complex, technological society with its complicated interaction between the school, home and other agencies within the global environment that constitutes the educational ecology. The more advanced the education of parents and the more developed their consciousness about the value of education, the greater the likelihood that their children will take advantage of school instruction.

In the light of the investigations cited above and the debates ensuing from them, we shall have to reappraise the role of the school as a competence-imparting institution in relation to other institutions, such as the family, mass media, and voluntary organizations. Such a reappraisal will help us to understand the crisis that has been triggered by the discrepancy between the expectations of what the school should perform and what it is actually able to perform.

A more faceted conception of equality

The roots of the classical liberal conception of equality of educational opportunity are in the eighteenth century with Locke, Helvetius, and, most important of all, Jean-Jacques Rousseau. In *Du Contrat Social* of 1762 he spells out how in the 'natural' state men are born equal with the rights within the framework of the 'general will'. There are innate differences in personal qualities but these do not jeopardize social equality as long as society rewards people according to their merits and not according to birth and wealth. A 'natural aristocracy' emerges in a society that dissolves the privileges that form a basis for 'artificial aristocracy', an expression that means the same as 'ascriptive' aristocracy in modern sociology.

The famous Preamble of the American Declaration of Independence of 1776 was first drafted by Thomas Jefferson, who was strongly influenced by Helvetius and Rousseau. When he and the other Founding Fathers said that 'all men are created equal' they meant that all are born with the same moral and political rights but not that they are endowed with equal capacities and qualifications. When Jefferson used the expression 'natural aristocracy' he meant the same as Rousseau, namely that no artificial barriers should prevent the natural aristocracy from achieving the social status that matched their talents.

The founder of the common public school in the United States, Horace Mann, belonged to the same tradition. He saw the school as an instrument for an open society to achieve social justice, remove poverty, and achieve equality of opportunity. He is often quoted as labelling the school as the 'Great Equalizer'. Similar strains of thought are to be found among many of the European liberals who fought for a common basic school that would put young people on equal footing in realizing their different talents.

Equality of opportunity was by many implicity conceived in terms of social Darwinism.

> Everyone in the jungle (or in society, or in school) was to be treated equally: one standard, one set of books, one fiscal formula for children everywhere, regardless of race, creed and color. Success went to the resourceful, the ambitious, the bright, the strong. Those who failed were stupid or shiftless, but whatever the reason, failure was the responsibility of the individual (or perhaps of his parents, poor fellow) but certainly not that of the school or the society (Schrag, 1970, p. 70).

The rethinking about the equality problem that has been going on in recent years has widened the perspective on the consequences of social Darwinism. The question was asked whether one should not also consider what comes out of the system, that is to say whether equality of *results* is not more important than equality of initial opportunity. The practical implication of this is that extra resources should be provided to those who are socially and culturally deprived. This has, for instance, been the philosophy behind what in the 1960s emerged as programmes of 'compensatory education', most well known of which has been the Headstart Program. In his 1966 report to the United States Office of Education, Coleman points out that 'equality of educational opportunity implies not only "equal" schools but equally effective schools, whose influence will overcome the differences in the starting point of children from different social groups' (Coleman, 1966).

The implication in terms of policy that ensues from the rethinking of the concept of equal opportunity is that it is rather pointless to put the final responsibility for scholastic success or failure on the individual. One has to shift the burden of responsibility to the system—to the educational system and/or society at large.

Dilemmas in achieving equality in education

As has become increasingly evident, the traditional mode of conceiving equality in education and of framing policy to achieve equality of opportunity is beset with certain dilemmas that have seldom been made explicit.

The first basic dilemma lies in the fact that the educational system is there to impart competencies and therefore by necessity creates differences. The school cannot at the same time serve as an equalizer and as an instrument that establishes, reinforces and legitimizes distinctions. As long as there is only one approved avenue to the 'mainstream of dignity' for which some are selected according to one single, linear standard (bright, average, stupid) which implies that some are destined to fail, people are lured to aspire for something they are unable to achieve. To paraphrase Orwell: those who from the outset are more equal than others will take particular advantage. In his review of the report on 'Youth' submitted by the Panel of Youth chaired by James Coleman, Martin Trow in discussing the policies proposed by the panel points out the second dilemma of diversity versus equality. By making a broader spectrum of formal options available to the young people for what they may want to pursue one also introduces forces that work in the direction of inequality. He says:

> . . . the very qualities that make special schools attractive to voluntary choice make them inappropriate for forced choice. Looked at the other way, the more schools are the same, the less complaint can be made there is an educational loss arising from forced assignment (p. 222–23).
>
> The commitment to diversity and free choice makes an implicit assumption that all choices are equally good if they are free (p. 224).

Therefore, the problem of achieving real equality of opportunity is to provide multiple options based on different values that are *not* ranked along only one dimension. We have begun to realize that uniform provision within education is not a single solution to a more equal society. As Dobzhansky has shown: equality in biological assets calls for pluralism, not identity, in treatment.

A third basic dilemma is the one between equality and meritocracy. We submit that it has become more acute in the technologically complex society. It was first made explicit in a dramatic way by Michael Young in his diatribe, *The Rise of the meritocracy* (1958).

T. H. Fitzgerald in his review of 'Youth' (1974, p. 34) states the case very succinctly:

> We live in a country which has wanted to be equal but has also wanted to be efficient. We have believed, in a general way, in freedom for the individual, but we also wanted order, and to reward merit. We have utilized schools not only as an instrument for increasing equality (and therefore freedom), but also as a system for sorting, credentialing, and tracking, along with inculcating the values appropriate for such arrangements. A society organized around the principle of merit (or the presumption thereof) will tend to accumulate differences in life chances among its citizens. If it is to be efficient, it must set up gatekeeping and succession functions. If it is to distribute differentially whatever rewards are valued, it must enjoy legitimacy or maintain a constrained order to deal with resultant tensions. We are now more aware of how these divergent objectives and incompatible values pull us apart, but the schools are only one ground for this encounter.

The egalitarian–meritocratic dilemma cuts across various types of economies and social orders. It emerges with forcefulness in all highly industrialized countries, be they capitalist or socialist. In his study of the coming post-industrial society, Bell (1973) foresees a growing element of meritocracy. The movement toward the 'new centrality of theoretical knowledge, the primacy of theory over empiricism, and the codification of knowledge into abstract systems of symbols that can be translated into many different and varied circumstances' means that rationality and systematized knowledge rather than property and political status become the basis of influence and power. Bell sees the ascendence of technology and increased bureaucratic controls, which increase the influence of professional and scientific élites, as salient features of the post-industrial society.

The equality–meritocracy dilemma is not just one of the increased power of educated intelligence. It is not just that the highly educated will become more prestigious, more influential and better paid. There is also a tendency for meritocratic prerogatives to be passed on from one generation to the next.

In the liberal conception of meritocracy there is a high degree of intergenerational mobility in social status due to intra-familial variation in capacity (Herrnstein, 1973). A 'just reshuffling' takes place between the social classes according to inborn capacity. Those who are born into privileged circumstances, but genetically are 'regressions' towards the mean, will also regress in social status, whereas those of high genetic potential in lower classes will move upwards in status. But the notion that the social classes will 'sort themselves out' according to inborn capacity between generations is not supported by particularly convincing evidence. One finds in different social orders that those who 'made it' to advanced positions (not least by means of advanced education) tend to pass on their privileges to the next generation. In a society where the inheritance of wealth is nil or close to nil the best that parents in privileged positions can do is to try hard to support their children in getting access to further attractive education.

The passing on of achieved status from one generation to the next is in the meritocratic society a substitute for the inherited privileges in the ascriptive society. All industrial countries are very far from the intergenerational 'reshuffling' of statuses believed in by those who advocate systematic meritocracy based on intellect and effort. The 'new intelligentsia' in countries which have recently gained independence and/or have gone through a rapid process of modernization spearheaded by the new educated class have a vested interest in preserving the privileges that have often been won with much work and sacrifice. Lipset (1972, p. 106) concludes, after having reviewed the literature on social mobility, that

> advanced Communist countries have not been more successful in removing all barriers to upward social mobility than the advanced Western countries . . . And despite the efforts of many societies to ensure that educational resources are equally available to all, everywhere lower-class children seem unable to take full advantage of them.

There is in my view an intrinsic element of meritocracy in the social fabric of advanced industrialization. It is connected with a strong demand for expertise with advanced training in fields such as administration, technology, science, and communication (in a wide sense, including teaching). The necessity during the 'take-off' period towards modernization to recruit a new intelligentsia makes the social status system somewhat more fluid. Ascriptive status determined by birth and social background is partly replaced by achieved status for which education becomes increasingly important. In societies with universal secondary education and in transition to mass higher education, further education gains in importance not primarily for acquiring particular job competencies but for maintaining one's competitive power on the labour market (Thurow, 1972). The employment system expects the educational system to do the sifting and sorting which in its turn makes the educational system more competitive. With job recruitment increasingly being done on the basis of certificates and degrees, the better educated have better chances of climbing the social ladder than the less educated or, at least, do not run the same risk of slipping down. Questions of examinations and grades have become increasingly controversial as a result of this development.

The impact that meritocratic factors have on a society depends upon the value attached to economic growth as a worthwhile goal and how one sees its compatibility with subjective indicators of the 'quality of life'. Since economic growth so closely depends on efficient utilization of modern technology and management techniques, a new premium will be put on those competencies which will guarantee success in the competition for prestigious positions and high social status.

The solution to the equality problem is in my opinion inseparably connected with how the problem of economic growth is resolved.

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Thoughts on the distribution of schooling and the distribution of earnings in developing countries

Mark Blaug

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Introduction

Over the past three decades, the world has experienced a veritable explosion of post-secondary schooling, encouraged if not entirely produced by government policies aimed at reducing the private costs of higher education to students and their parents. The motives for these expansionary policies were many and varied but among them was the belief that more education and, in particular, the equalisation of access to secondary and higher education would work to equalize the size distribution of personal income. Recent years, however, have seen a drastic change of attitude in this regard. The optimism of the early post-war period, inspired in large part by the then new sociology of education and in small part by the development of human capital theory has given way to a profound pessimism about the possibilities of altering the distribution of income by purely educational means. Various American, British and French writers have drawn attention to the relative constancy of the distribution of total income since 1945 despite the educational explosion, and in so doing have explicitly denied the significance of education as a factor in the generation of both earned and unearned income. Some, like James Coleman, Samuel Bowles and Torsten Husén, argue that family origins rather than schooling are decisive in determining an individual's life chances; others, like Arthur Jensen and Richard Herrnstein, instead give more credit to genotype; and a few, like Christopher Jencks, go so far as to attribute most of the observed variation in lifetime incomes to the action of chance. But all more or less agree that the equalization of educational opportunities cannot be expected to make much impact on the distribution of incomes.[1]

No doubt, the new pessimism that has come to dominate debates about education in Europe and America has not yet been successfully exported to the Third World: in Asia, Africa and Latin America, public opinion still holds that educational expansion at public expense will work to equalize the life chances of individuals, or, at any rate, that the only defensible meritocracy is one based on educational certificates. But judging by the ten-year lag in the transmission of intellectual ideas from rich to poor countries, the new pessimism will soon reach

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[1] For a perfect reflection of this virtual consensus, see OECD, *Education, inequality and life chances*, Paris, OECD, I, II, 1975.

Third World countries, making the old optimism as rare in Karachi, Nairobi and Rio de Janeiro as it already is in New York, Paris and London.

My aim in this paper is to argue that the new pessimism is at best a three-quarters-truth and at worst a half-truth. It is possible significantly to equalize the distribution of income by specific policies designed to alter either the pattern of access to further schooling or the pattern of financing the existing numbers that achieve access. The relationship between schooling and income distribution is a subject so difficult and complex that I have limited myself in this paper to a series of notes or commentaries on selected themes. What I have to say will, I hope, indicate the lines of research which promise the greatest potential in the years to come.

Rates of return, and all that

As we all know, private rates of return on educational investment have been defended by some economists as principal determinants of the private demand for education, while others have defended social rates of return as furnishing public investment criteria for educational decisions. I am sorry to say that rates of return also enter into our income-distribution story. They constitute in fact the crucial link between the distribution of schooling in the labour force and the distribution of earned income from employment. Any change in enrolments in the successive levels of the educational system, such as to equalize the distribution of years of schooling in the labour force, will equalize the size distribution of earned income if and only if the marginal private rates of return to successive years of schooling remain constant, or at least do not decline as a result of the new enrolment pattern. But surely, some of you will object, it all depends on whether these private rates of return truly reflect the tendency of schooling to augment the human capital of individuals? Suppose that education only leads to higher incomes because of the favourable home background of better-educated persons; in that case, the effect of a change in enrolments and hence in the distribution of schooling in the labour force on the distribution of earned income will depend entirely on the social origins of these new students irrespective of what happens to private rates of return.

Well, yes and no: the question concerns the magnitude of the coefficient on schooling in a regression of earnings on schooling, holding constant such other personal characteristics as age, work experience, family background and native ability, etc. In the bad old days, rate-of-return analysts used to estimate the 'pure' effect of schooling on earning by multiplying the observed age–education–earnings profiles by an 'alpha-coefficient' whose size was supposed to reflect the influence of the non-school factors on earnings. Nowadays, of course, rates of return are typically calculated from a statistically estimated 'earnings function' and these have proliferated in vast numbers in recent years, including some half-dozen applications to LDCs.[1] There are very serious problems about the interpretation of these earnings functions—whether single-equations earnings functions are properly 'identified' in an econometric sense, whether such critical variables as 'family background' and 'native ability' have been satisfactorily measured and whether the cross-section data that most investigators have used for lack of longitudinal data are not seriously misleading—that we simply cannot enter into here.[1] But what does stand out in all the two hundred or so separate estimates of earnings functions around the world is that not a single study has produced anything but a positive coefficient on the quantity-of-schooling variable, no matter whether the earnings function is a non-recursive single-equation estimate or a recursive multiple-equation estimate, and no matter how many other independent variables measured in *n* different ways are entered into the equation. In short, on the basis of these 200 studies it is impossible to deny the conclusion—and it is probably the only safe conclusion that we can draw—that, as Finis Welch said, 'the schooling–income association is not spurious'.[2]

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[1] See G. Psacharopoulos, *Earnings and education in OECD countries*, Paris, OECD, 1975, supplemented by F.T. Juster, 'Introduction and summary', *Education, income and human behavior*, ed. F.T. Juster, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1975; G. Psacharopoulos, 'Family background, education

Admittedly, the schooling coefficient, while positive, is small in virtually all these studies; it is always smaller than the coefficient on age or years of work experience (age minus the pre-school years) and sometimes it is even smaller than family background measured by father's occupation or father's and mother's years of education (mind you, it is frequently larger than family background and almost always larger than early IQ). There is no denying the fact, therefore, that the distribution of schooling as such is not a powerful instrument for equalizing income distribution, particularly when compared to tax and expenditure policies

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[1] But see my 'Human capital theory: a slightly jaundiced survey', *Journal of economic literature*, September 1976, pp. 842–5.

[2] F. Welch, 'Human capital theory: education, discrimination, and life cycle', *American economic review*, May 1975, p. 65.

or to direct interventions in the labour market via incomes policies. But I would insist that it is one non-negligible instrument for equalizing income distribution and it may even be one that is more politically palatable than the more powerful, direct instruments available to governments.

To fix the argument, consider a hypothetical example in a developing country *X* which has a more-or-less effective period of compulsory schooling of five years, the minimum school-leaving age being 12. Now suppose the period of compulsory schooling is raised to six years, so that the minimum school-leaving age becomes 13. What will this do to the distribution of earned incomes in country *X*? To answer that question we need, first, to determine what the new school-leaving age does to the distribution of schooling in the labour force, and, second, to discover what it will do to the private rate of return on investment in post-compulsory education.

The answer to the first question may strike some readers as obvious. But it is by no means obvious. There is no reason why a raising of the school-leaving age (ROSLA) from the age of 12 to 13 should necessarily equalize or rather reduce the inequality of the distribution of schooling. If it affects the tendency to stay on in school voluntarily at every age above 13, so that the proportion of 13-year-olds who used to stay on is now exactly equal to the proportion of 14-year-olds who stay on, and likewise for every other higher age cohort, it will leave the distribution of schooling exactly where it was before. Indeed, if longer schooling stimulates the taste for education, as many educators argue, the ROSLA may exactly raise the apex of the educational pyramid and thus increase the existing inequality in the distribution of schooling.

Let us suppose, however, that the ROSLA does succeed in reducing the inequality in the distribution of schooling. Now let us ask whether this will affect the marginal rates of return by years of schooling in an upward or a downward direction. By removing the entire age cohort of 12-year-olds from the labour market, the ROSLA will tend markedly to raise the earnings of juvenile labour (13-year-olds, 14-year-olds, etc.), although less in the long run than in the short run as the repercussions of the reduced labour supply move up the age distribution of the working force. The precise rise in juvenile earnings will depend on the elasticity of substitution of adult for juvenile labour and it is complicated in practice by the consideration that the new juvenile labour is slightly more educated but slightly less experienced than the old adult labour. If the ROSLA causes such changes in age-specific earnings as actually to raise the returns to staying in school until 14, 15, 16, etc., a more equal distribution of schooling may in fact be associated with a less and not a more equal distribution of earnings. In other words, the effect of the ROSLA on earnings in country *X*, or in any other country for that matter, is an empirical question, which cannot be settled by *a priori* reasoning.

Nevertheless, the presumption created by earnings functions is that a ROSLA of one year would in most countries have quite a significant effect in equalizing distribution of earned income. For example, given the empirical relationship between schooling and earnings in the United States, Marin and Psacharopoulos found that an extra year of compulsory schooling in the U.S.A. might be expected to lead to a 10 per cent fall in the variance of the logarithm of earnings, whereas I found that the British ROSLA of 1972 (raising the leaving age from 15 to 16) has by now reduced the variance of the logarithm of earnings by as much as 24 per cent.[1] No such study has yet been carried out for any developing country but I would doubt that it would produce very different results.[2] To that extent, the new pessimism about the possibilities of changing income distribution by educational policies ought to be replaced by a modest optimism, particularly with reference to developing countries where the average number of years of schooling embodied in the labour force is rarely more than three or four years.

To be sure, the distribution of earnings is not the same thing as the distribution of income. The proportion of property income in total personal income, which in advanced countries stands at perhaps 20 per cent (to which must be added another 10 per cent for pensions and social-security payments before we come to income from employment), amounts to as much as 30 and even 40 per cent in many developing countries.[3] So, whatever we conclude about earnings functions and the 'pure' effect of schooling on earnings, the fact remains that educational policies in LDCs can only directly affect two-thirds to three-quarters of the total size distribution of personal incomes. Moreover, if the accumulation of non-human capital actually competes with human capital formation—the more parents have to finance their children to attend schooling, the less income-yielding property they can accumulate—it is conceivable that something like a ROSLA would equalize the distribution of earned income but only at the cost of a less equal distribution of property income.

This concentration of property income begins to show the complexities of predicting the effects of educational policies on the distribution of total income. But there are others which are highly relevant in the circumstances of LDCs. All the earnings functions that have so far been estimated for LDCs use data on urban residents only and, in many cases, data on an even more restricted population, namely, males employed in the so-called 'modern sector', thus ignoring female and male self-employed, own-account workers in the 'informal sector' who invariably constitute the majority of the population in Asia and Africa. Thus, our earlier argument about a ROSLA in country *X* implicitly assumed that earned income is generated by a wage-employment situation. Even if we were quite confident about the 'pure' effect of schooling on earnings from employment, we know very little about the effects of education on the activities of the self-

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1. A. Marin and G. Psacharopoulos, 'Schooling and income distribution', *Review of economics and statistics*, August 1976; and M. Blaug and S. Morris, 'The distribution of schooling and the distribution of earnings: some British evidence', 1978 (mimeo.).
2. For some suggestive evidence, see C. Dougherty and G. Psacharopoulos, 'The misallocation cost of investment in education', *Journal of human resources*, Fall 1977; G. Psacharopoulos, 'Unequal access to education and income distribution', *Economist*, vol. 125, nº 3, 1977; and P. Richards, *Education and income distribution in Asia: a preliminary analysis*, Geneva, ILO/WEP, (Research Working Paper, Income Distribution and Employment Programme).
3. See M. Carnoy, 'Education and economic development: the first generation', *Economic development and cultural change*, supplement, 1977, p. 443.

employed (on prima facie grounds, it might be smaller or larger than the effects in the modern sector), not to mention the even more controversial problem of the effect of education on the income of farmers. No doubt, it is difficult to imagine how any educational policy that actually improved the distribution of schooling in the countryside could worsen rather than improve the distribution of rural incomes. Nevertheless, we have every reason to be cautious in predicting that a particular pattern of educational expansion throughout a poor country will necessarily alter the distribution of total income in that country in a particular direction; but that is not to say that the effect, whatever it is, will be trivial or that all the egalitarian aspirations of educational reformers can be dismissed as 'misguided liberalism'.

There are those who will assert that all this is nonsense. Educated people may earn more but that is not because education has made them more productive; education merely selects those who will slot smoothly into the productive machine by screening out the unfit and the untrainable; there is no wage flexibility in the labour market and what school-leavers compete for is not the same job at different wages but different jobs at fixed wages; and so if there is expansion at any level of education, all that happens is that more educated people move into jobs previously held by less educated people while all the time the distribution of earnings remains exactly the same. This is the so-called 'screening hypothesis' or 'job competition model' and it is supposed to explain why the educational expansion of the last generation has had so little effect on the distribution of income. It also suggests that, whatever is the private rate of return, the true social rate of return on educational investment is actually zero. If all this were not enough, we can add the theory of segmented labour markets according to which women, ethnic minorities and other socially disadvantaged groups are more or less doomed to spend their lives in 'secondary labour markets' where wages are low, promotion is rare, lay-offs are frequent, and all work is casual and insecure; once again, there is no reason to think that educational expansion will break down this division of labour markets into privileged and underprivileged sectors and thus serve to equalize the distribution of income.

Some of the apparent predictions of the screening hypothesis have been contradicted by several authors[1] and it has been argued that if the screening hypothesis is true, all that follows is that the principal function of the educational system is to provide employers with a cheap sorting device, in which case the social rate of return on educational investment measures the returns to resources invested in a particular occupational selection mechanism and not to those invested in improving the quality of the future labour force.[2] This is a genuine insight but it only follows from a fairly extreme version of the screening hypothesis with the truth probably falling half-way between the screening story and the story told by human-capital theory. Likewise, the job-competition model has to be expressed in very extreme terms to yield the conclusion that the distribution of earned income will never respond to variations in the distribution of schooling.[1] As for the theory of labour-market dualism, critics have found it difficult to find any evidence that labour markets in advanced countries can be neatly divided into 'primary' and 'secondary' sectors[2] and the applications of the theory to date to developing countries have been highly ambiguous.[3]

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[1] See references and the more extended discussion in my 'Human capital theory', op. cit., pp. 846-8.

[2] Nevertheless, if 'screening' is combined with 'signalling', it may follow that the social rate of return as calculated by human-capital theorists leads to wrong policy conclusions: if firms screen potential employees in terms of educational credentials, each individual is motivated to obtain additional education to provide a 'signal' of his superior qualities; as more and more individuals of a given ability attain a certain level of education, those with superior abilities are induced to attain still higher levels of education; the inevitable result of screening, therefore, is over-investment in education and its remedy is a reduction in public subsidies to post-compulsory education. For a

But the principal difficulty with all these arguments is that the distribution of earned incomes in advanced countries has in fact responded in recent years to the rising flood of college graduates,[4] and even in developing countries, where admittedly labour markets are highly imperfect and earnings are relatively inflexible, the returns to education are on the decline as a consequence of the recent educational explosion. It would take another paper to round up all the evidence and I will therefore confine myself to one single source for eight African countries.

Table 1 shows dramatic reductions in the earnings differentials of public sector employees with successively higher levels of education in six out of the seven countries, Malawi being the only exception.[5] Now it is true that some of these countries, like Tanzania and to a lesser extent Kenya, have pursued incomes policies in recent years designed to squeeze salary differences in the public sector, which necessarily result in a narrowing of earnings differentials by education. But such policies will not account for the changes observed elsewhere in Africa, and even in Tanzania and Kenya it is doubtful that top salaries could have been frozen and in Tanzania actually cut if there were not a surplus of highly educated manpower willing to accept employment at lower salaries.

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suggestive but inconclusive study in a developing country, see N. Brooke, J. Oxenham and A. Little, *Qualifications and employment in Mexico*, Brighton, University of Sussex, Institute of Development Studies Research Report, 1978 (mimeo.).

[1] See Richards, op. cit., pp. 36–7.

[2] See G. Cain, 'The challenge of the segmented labour market theories to orthodox theory: a survey', *Journal of economic literature*, March 1976; G. Psacharopoulos, 'Labour market duality and income distribution: the case of the U.K.', *Personal income distribution*, eds. W. Krelle and A.F. Shorrocks, Amsterdam, North-Holland, 1978, and 'Further evidence on the relevance of the dual labour market hypothesis for the U.K.' London, LSE Centre for Labour Economics, Discussion Paper 38, 1978 (mimeo.).

[3] See M. Carnoy, *Can educational policy equalize income distribution in Latin America?*, Geneva, ILO/WEP Research Working Paper, Income Distribution and Employment Programme, 1975; and 'Segmented labour markets: a review of the theoretical and empirical literature and its implications for educational planning', in *Education, work and employment-II*, Paris, Unesco/IIEP, 1980.

[4] See R.B. Freeman, 'Overinvestment in college training', *Hournal of human resources*, Summer 1975; M. Carnoy and D. Marenbach, 'The return to schooling in the United States, 1939–69', ibid; and R.B. Freeman, *The overeducated American*, New York, Academic Press, 1976.

[5] Egypt is included in the table, although there are no available two-period data for Egypt, in order to demonstrate that the most education-intensive country in Africa with the highest proportion of university graduates as a proportion of population found anywhere in that continent also has the smallest salary ratios of any of the countries in the table.

TABLE 1. Ratios of public sector starting and fifth-year salaries by educational levels in selected African countries, 1964-76

Country	Years covered	Salary level	University graduates to no education	Completed secondary to completed primary education
Botswana	1964/70	1	13.8	3.4
		5	11.7	4.0
	1970/74	1	10.8	2.9
		5	10.2	3.5
	1974/76	1	5.4	2.5
		5	6.1	2.8
Egypt	1971/74	1	2.1	1.2
		5	2.1	1.3
Ghana	1967/74	1	8.1	2.7
		5	8.1	2.7
	1974/75	1	4.8	2.0
		5	4.9	2.0
Kenya	1967/70	1	14.1	5.8
		5	13.5	5.8
	1970/74	1	9.4	6.0
		5	8.7	5.7
Malawi	1970/71	1	13.4	7.0
		5	16.4	7.5
	1975/76	1	13.2	6.7
		5	16.2	7.3
Tanzania	1964/65	1	7.8	3.3
		5	8.9	4.0
	1970/71	1	6.2	2.5
		5	7.2	3.0
Zambia	1970/74	1	7.6	2.6
		5	10.2	2.4
	1974/78	1	6.9	2.6
		5	8.6	2.6

Source UNECA, *Survey of economic and social conditions in Africa 1976–1977 (Part I)*, Addis Ababa, Economic Commission for Africa, 1978, Table II-15, p. 114.

The notion that labour markets in developing countries are 'fix-price' markets where absolutely all adjustments are in terms of quantities rather than prices fails to carry conviction. There is no reason therefore why we should not continue to entertain the educational optimism of yesterday provided we do not expect a dramatic levelling of incomes as a result of educational policies.

Equity in finance for education

Despite everything we have said, it remains true that, if the principal objective of educational policies is equity rather than efficiency, the obvious entry point is not enrolment ratios in the various levels of the educational system but the methods adopted to subsidize education. The typical pattern in the Third World is to provide free primary education, and sometimes not even that, free secondary education on a restricted scale complemented by some public support for fee-paying, private secondary schools, and finally free residential higher education, at which point students also receive free room and board and even small cash living allowances. Since all these subsidies are paid for out of a tax system which rests heavily on regressive indirect taxes, the suspicion inevitably arises that the way in which education is normally financed in developing countries tends constantly to increase the degree of inequality in the size distribution of personal incomes after tax.

But suspicion is one thing and proof is another. And proof in this case is not easy to come by. If the objective of subsidies to education is merely to create 'equality of educational opportunity', that is, equality of access and not equality of results, the success of the subsidy system can be judged solely in terms of the social class composition of students in post-compulsory schooling independently of the taxes paid to finance the subsidies. If, on the other hand, the objective is the more ambitious one of equalizing the distribution of personal income, then, of course, both the incidence of benefits received and the incidence of taxes paid must be included in a total assessment of the subsidy system. And in that case, what is relevant is not just the current distribution of beneficiaries and taxpayers but the distribution of lifetime incomes of both beneficiaries and taxpayers. The oft-encountered proposition that subsidies to, say, higher education operate in most countries to make the distribution of income more unequal because the average taxpayer is poorer than the average beneficiary of the subsidy is simply wrong; it ignores the fact that some of the poor taxpayers of today may become the rich taxpayers of tomorrow precisely because of the benefits of higher education. If the subsidy system constitutes an intergenerational transfer of income, as it surely does, the argument must take account of lifetime tax and lifetime income streams—this is the one thing we have learned from the famous Hansen–Weisbrod–Pechman debate about the distributional effects of public higher education in California.[1]

Nevertheless, it is important to ask what could be inferred from annual data on taxes and subsidies, because we are never likely to be furnished with appropriate longitudinal data, particularly for LDCs. Let us, therefore, divide the problem into two parts: (a) what would be the distributional effect of subsidies to education if the present size distribution of family incomes remained invariant over time; and (b) what are its actual effects, taking account of intergenerational movements in the distribution of family incomes?

There is a prior question, however, that must be disposed of. In the first instance, the subsidy system for education represents a transfer of income from single people and childless couples to families with children of school-going ages. If family size varied monotonically with family income, we could derive a clear-cut conclusion about the distributional effects of the subsidy system. However, an examination of the demographic evidence belies any simple relationship between family size and family income even in advanced countries, much less developing countries. We may, therefore, assume that family size, or more precisely the number of children in a family aged 18–22, is randomly associated with levels of family income. This leaves us with the problem of distinguishing between all taxpayers, on the one hand, and those taxpayers who derive positive benefits from subsidies to higher education, on the other.

Let us now rank all families that pay tax by their annual incomes and then let us rank the same families again by the education subsidies they now receive (many of the entries in this ranking will of course be zero; since we are assessing the specific effects of higher education subsidies, we ignore the many other kinds of subsidies and transfers that families receive). We can then express the degree of 'progression' in these two distributions by the average propensity to pay tax, the tax–income ratio, in the first ranking and the average propensity to receive education subsidies, the subsidy–income ratio, in the second ranking. If the slope of the subsidy–income ratio exceeds the slope of the tax–income ratio, as in Figure 1 overleaf, we have the necessary but not sufficient conditions for an educational subsidy system to worsen the distribution of family income.

The sufficient conditions for greater inequality in the distribution of family income involve the net movement of taxpayers from low- to high-income families in the course of a lifetime, possibly but not necessarily because of the tendency of education to raise the lifetime income of graduates above those of their parents. To sum up: subsidies to education will redistribute income towards greater inequality if (1) the degree of 'progression' of subsidies is greater than that of all taxes taken together (as depicted in Figure 1); and (2) the number of 'poor'

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[1] See W. Miklius, 'The distributional effects of public higher education: a comment', *Higher education*, November 1975, and references cited there, supplemented since then by J. Conlisk, 'A further look at the Hansen–Weisbrod–Pechman debate', *Journal of human resources*, spring 1977; J.W. McGuire, 'The distribution of subsidy to students in California public higher education', ibid., summer 1976; and W. Lee Hansen and B.A. Weisbrod, 'Reply', and McGuire, 'Rejoinder', ibid., winter 1978.

taxpayers in the present generation that rise to become 'rich' taxpayers in the next generation exceeds the obverse tendency of some taxpayers to fall in the income hierarchy as time passes.

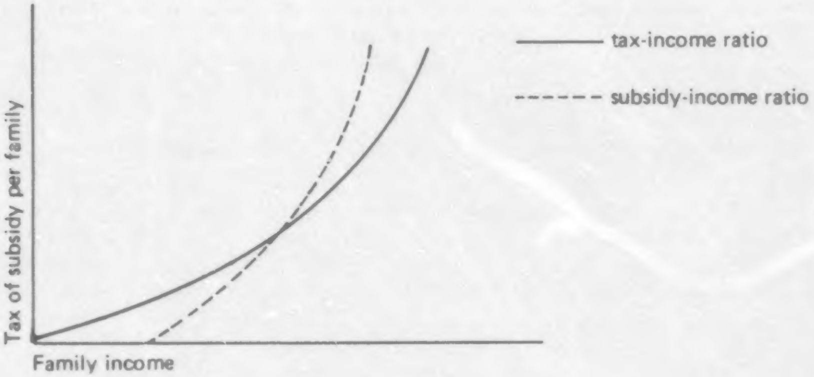

FIGURE 1. An illustration
Note: Because of indirect taxes, we may assume that all families pay some tax; hence, the tax–income ratio starts at the origin. If the tax system is 'progressive', the marginal tax rate will exceed the average and the tax–income ratio will rise with family incomes, as shown above; the subsidy–income curve may be similarly interpreted

There is evidence on (1) and (2) for a number of advanced countries, suggesting that both of our conditions for an adverse distributional effect of the educational subsidy system are fulfilled.[1] In other words, post-compulsory education in America and Europe is financed in such a way as to effectively transfer income from poor to rich. There is very little evidence on (1) and even less on (2) to demonstrate that the same holds true in developing countries. But in a pioneering effort, Gary Fields has shown that (2) at any rate applies with full force to the system of higher education in Kenya.[2] He has to cut corners to get his results, assuming for example that each Kenyan family in each income class with children attending higher education contributes to the finance of higher education in the same proportion as the fraction of the government budget spent on higher education. What he shows is that the very rich and the very poor in Kenya pay more towards the support of higher education than they receive in return as benefits, while the lion's share of the net benefits over costs go to middle-income families. His conclusions fail to carry us all the way from the finance of higher education in Kenya to the resulting distribution of income in Kenya because he lacks evidence

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[1] See M. Blaug and M. Woodhall, 'Patterns of subsidies to higher education in Europe', *Higher education*, 1978.

[2] G.S. Fields, 'Higher education and income distribution in a less developed country', *Oxford economic papers*, July 1975.

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on social mobility over time, our (2),[1] but his study shows what can be done even in data-poor developing countries.

After a decade of concern about the distributional effects of educational policies in developing countries, it seems surprising to me that so little has been accomplished in this area of fiscal equity. If there is any information that we desperately need, it is information on the distribution of the tax costs and educational subsidies received by families in different income categories in LDCs. It would also be highly desirable to launch some longitudinal studies or at least time-series investigations of the patterns of social mobility in developing countries. Attempts to get at the question directly by comparing distributions of schooling and distributions of total income in fact present far greater conceptual and practical problems than the indirect route of examining the distributional repercussions of the methods used to subsidize post-compulsory schooling. I would mark this as the single most fruitful area of future research on education in the Third World.

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1. It was not, of course, Fields' intention to ask our question about educational finance. Instead, he tests the Kenyan system of subsidizing higher education by three criteria of fiscal equity; his third criterion, that of ability to pay, is roughly equal to our criterion of the degree of progression of the tax–subsidy ratio, except that he adds the income differentials attributable to higher education to the subsidy received in each family-income class to get a measure of the total benefits received. For another heroic effort along similar lines to those of Fields, see J.-P. Jallade, *Public expenditure on education and income distribution in Colombia*, Washington, D.C., 1974 (World Bank Staff Occasional Papers No. 18).

Income-contingent student loans

A number of economists have in recent years advocated the introduction of student loans schemes for higher education in the Third World as the sole or principal means of aiding students, sometimes coupled with the recommendation of a simultaneous rise in tuition fees.[1] Usually, the motive for this proposal is the desire to restrict higher education by shifting an increasing share of its costs on to the students and parents that directly benefit from it. But an associated motive that is implicit in many of these recommendations is the desire to secure greater equity in the finance of higher education by invoking something like the benefit principle of taxation. But everyone has had to face the fact that a loans scheme, even if repaid by a 'graduate tax' on future incomes, would discriminate against poorer students unless it could be supplemented by a scholarship programme for poor students.[2] But the problem in all cases is how we identify poor students in countries where no more than 5 to 10 per cent of the population pay income tax, where many farm families and own-account workers keep no books and can hardly calculate their own income, where family income in rural areas and in 'the informal sector' fluctuates wildly from week to week and year to year, and where the institution of the extended family makes it even difficult to define the family unit, much more the income of that unit. The favourite device of giving the scholarships to those who have scored high marks in their secondary schooling leaving certificate is of course the worst kind of policy because it always turns out that the best students as judged by examination results are also the children of the well-to-do. Taking a leaf from the ILO Philippines Report,[1] I once argued that

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[1] See e.g. Fields op. cit., p. 258, and 'Private returns to investment in higher levels of education in Kenya', *Society, education and development: some perspectives from Kenya*, eds. D. Court and D. Ghai, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1977; and my *Education and the employment problem in developing countries*, Geneva, ILO, 1973, pp. 43–6. The list of authors who have recommended the same thing in the First World is of course much longer. For some descriptions of experience with loans schemes in LDCs, see D.C. Rogers, 'Student loan programmes and returns to investment in higher levels of education in Kenya', *Economic development and cultural change*, January 1972; P. Williams, 'Lending for learning: an experiment in Ghana', *Minerva*, July 1974; and Jallade, op. cit.

[2] In principle, a graduate tax should not be discriminatory because it is levied on the future income of the student, not the present income of the student's parents. But it has been argued that poor students are risk averters who lack confidence that higher education will indeed result in higher incomes; if so, they will have to be coaxed to enter universities by scholarships rather than loans.

> Parental income could be assessed on the basis of father's occupation, and a scale of average incomes per occupation could then be established on the basis of the best evidence available. Parents would be presumed to earn the incomes corresponding to the scale but an appeal board could be set up to adjudicate any claims of incomes below the scale. The entire system could be administered on a regional, provincial or state level and the scholarships would be given to students, not to institutions, for reasons that are perhaps obvious. This would be a rough-and-ready method and would inevitably be unfair in some individual cases. But on the principle that social policy is made for groups and not for individuals, such a crude method of assessing the income of parents would at least suffice to establish the principle that financial assistance should go to the talented poor and not to the clever rich.

Now, this may be or may not be a feasible proposal: some such system is in fact at work in the limited loans system operated in India and Pakistan for certain selected categories of students but I am not aware that these have ever been systematically evaluated. On the basis of the facts discovered by Fields that 73 per cent of the students at the University of Nairobi and 87 per cent of the students at Kenya teachers' training colleges have fathers that own some land, George Psacharopoulos has proposed that land-ownership by families should be used to assess family income, presumably on some sort of scale matching acreage with income, so that fees can be varied with parental incomes (he denies that a loan system is practicable in developing countries).[2] But, apart from the question of what to do about the remaining 13 to 27 per cent of students whose fathers own no land, the proposal in question only makes sense for subsaharan Africa where land-ownership is in fact widely diffused, assuming of course that land-property registration is universal in Africa (it does not in fact exist in Ethiopia and, for all I know, in one or two other African countries); it does not begin to meet the problem of identifying poor students in Asia and Latin America where it is difficult to see how anything other than a crude, rough-and-ready income-by-occupation scale could meet the circumstances.

Once again, it seems to me that here is a research area of enormous importance that has gone almost completely neglected. Apart from the Fields study of Kenya, I know of only two or three developing countries where we have any information on the social-class composition of students in higher education.[3] It is only by gathering this information that we can tell what the problems are in identifying the incomes of students' families for purposes of devising income-contingent scholarship programmes and student loans schemes. Why are all international, multinational and national aid agencies and research centres studying the trivial and the irrelevant when the vital, unanswered problems which they alone are well equipped to tackle lie all around us?

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[1] Op. cit., pp. 339–40.

[2] G. Psacharopoulos, 'The perverse effects of public subsidization of education or how equitable is free education?', *Comparative education review*, February 1977, pp. 85–6.

[3] See Philippines Report, op.cit., pp. 327–30; Blaug, Layard and Woodhall, op.cit., pp. 130–3; and Richards, op.cit., pp. 5, 14.

Some key problems of equality in education

Kjell Eide

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The legitimacy of differential treatment

Problems of equality in education can be approached from many angles. We can examine whether individuals from different groups in society are treated in the same way in educational institutions, for instance in terms of access to the institutions or in terms of resources offered, and we can study the performance of individuals within such institutions, searching for systematic variations between individuals from different groups. If such variations are found, we can try to find out whether they are due to differential treatment within the institutions, or differences related to conditions external to the school. In the latter case, more equal performance might imply differentiated treatment in terms of resources or educational content.

Such relatively banal observations have a certain air of unreality. We would not really want everyone in school to perform exactly the same, and we do not really assume that individuals coming from different groups in society have necessarily the same needs to be met by education.[1] The idea that individuals may have different needs, but that the same proportion of individuals from each group have the same educational needs, is even more artificial. And we certainly would reject the idea that everyone should do the same after leaving school. Some of us may consider the idea that living conditions should be more equalized, but how this would relate to the way individuals are treated in school is an open question. We obviously need a firmer basis for discussions on equality in education.

Children and youngsters in school are treated differently, all the time. Teachers do not devote equal time to every pupil in the class, materials and tasks are often different for individual pupils, classes are handled differently, and schools vary considerably in most respects. Resources per pupil vary, pupils study different subjects, often with wide differences in costs, and some students stay on in education much longer than others. This differentiation is not neutral in relation to the groups to which the pupils belong, although in most cases systematic differences in the treatment of children from different groups are not explicitly aimed at. The fact is that differential treatment of individuals is seen as fully legitimate in our schools, even if it acts in a discriminatory way. In certain cases, however, the forms of unequal treatment are seen as regrettable, but at least temporarily unavoidable. And finally, certain forms of unequal treatment are regarded as absolutely unacceptable.

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[1] Even the proposition in theories on 'mastery learning', that when given enough time everyone can reach the same level of mastery, is mainly a cosmetic presentation of the same reality. When the slow learner has achieved mastery of the subject, the fast learner has already achieved mastery in the series of additional subjects.

Coming to grips with the question of inequality in education means examining more carefully such notions about legitimacy or illegitimacy of differential treatment of individual pupils, and the changes occurring in such notions from country to country, and in one country over time. Discrimination between religious and ethnic groups comes close to violating internationally agreed conventions on human rights, and few countries would accept this as legitimate a priori. Yet we know that such discrimination still exists, in spite of increased concern for more equal treatment in recent years.

Discrimination according to social class, geographical area or sex is, officially at least, regarded as regrettable in most countries. However, wide differences prevail, and in many countries substantial inequality even in the allocation of educational resources between such groups is defended on various grounds. Most countries still fully accept discrimination in favour of those performing best in school, both in terms of resources devoted to them and the time spent in school. When the special concern for those presumably most talented conflicts with the principle of equality in terms of such dimensions as mentioned above, the latter mostly have to yield. The principle of non-discrimination boils down to being valid only for individuals of about equal talent.

Defining talent is largely a prerogative of the education system. It may thus well be that unequal treatment of pupils from different groups is justified by the assumption that talent is unequally distributed between the groups. If so, the discrimination is usually seen as fully legitimate. If talented youth from certain groups is under-represented, the discrimination is seen as regrettable, but mostly as unavoidable.

Principles of equality are thus fairly regularly subordinated to the principle of unequal treatment of individuals with different abilities. The rationale for this may be that education has more to offer to talented students than to students with less ability. There is, however, very little evidence for this assumption. Talented students normally perform better in school, but this is no proof that the differences are caused by their education. The 'value added' due to education for students of different ability is mostly an open question. Probably the answer will depend on the kind of education offered. In all likelihood education adapted to the needs of talented students will give them more than others. It cannot be excluded, therefore, that if education were oriented towards the less able students they would be the ones benefiting most.

The lack of empirical justification for discrimination in favour of the most talented youth, as defined by the school system, invites the suspicion that other considerations are, in fact, more important for the actual subordination of equality ideals in education. A school system where selection for future positions in society is a prime function quite naturally will focus on the most talented, irrespective of the particular contributions education can make to different individuals. And in this case we are faced with a self-fulfilling prophecy: if educational credentials are used as a basis for social selection, educational performance will be a good predictor of future careers. In turn, this can be used to justify discrimination of individuals in favour of those with a high level of school performance, resulting by necessity in a reinforcement of inequalities in the society.

Yet there are some signs that even the legitimacy of differential treatment according to talent is increasingly questioned. Substantial resources are being earmarked specifically for those performing badly in school, although the price they have to pay is to be labelled 'handicapped'. Examinations and marks are being abandoned in some countries, and out-of-school experiences are increasingly given weight as criteria for access to education at more advanced levels. Basically, this reflects increasing doubts as to the validity of the school's definition of 'performance' and an increasing awareness of human qualities traditionally neglected in school.

Discriminatory resource allocation is not always easy to identify. It is some times camouflaged as cost differences between various forms of education. Comparing unit costs between, for instance, general and vocational training at the secondary level often reveals that teachers in general education are better qualified and better paid than in vocational training, and that other resources are allocated more generously to the former kind of training. This sometimes more than compensates for the fact that general education needs much less in terms of equipment and practical demonstration. There is no objective way of defining the 'right' costs of various forms of education. The fact that unit costs in vocational and general education correspond to a ratio of 3 to 1 in some countries, while the ratio is 1 to 1 in others, probably mainly reflects differences in the actual value attached to two forms of education.

Correspondingly, unit costs in higher education may relate to unit costs in primary education in the proportion 5 : 1 in some countries, and 2 : 1 in others. Again, the main reason for this difference is undoubtedly a difference in the politically determined concern for the groups typically represented at the two levels of education.

Finally, the different studies in higher education may show extreme variations in unit costs in some countries. For instance, the training of a graduate in medicine may cost as much as the training of ten graduates in the arts or in law. It is hardly accidental that such differences correspond to differences in the social composition of the student groups in those fields, as well as to the relative strength of the professional bodies recruited from those studies. Thus, although differential treatment in resource terms may be justified by differences in the actual costs needed for training in the various fields, a significant part of such differences may well be due to a hidden discrimination based on other criteria. The prestige and political power of the professions in question may be an important explanatory factor, as well as the typical social composition of the student groups. Thus also, in this case, the apparent legitimacy of discriminatory allocation of resources may be questioned.

Views on the legitimacy of differential treatment vary between countries, and also between individuals and groups in single countries, forming the basis of heated controversies in educational policy. There is also considerable dynamism in the development of such views over time. Forms of discrimination which were regarded as fully legitimate some decades ago are now highly disputed. New groups put forward new claims. The focus in recent years on ethnic groups and women is a well-known example. The case of the low performers in traditional terms seems to be emerging, and other groups may be in attendance. The important point, here, is that our concepts of legitimacy and justice in this field are changing. Inequality is a basic human feature, in school and elsewhere. How we react to it is a question of culture and ideology, interests and power. This situation leaves no easy task for the researcher wanting to study inequality in education.

Criteria for measuring inequality

Inequality may be measured in many different ways. As mentioned above, typical educational measures may be equal opportunity for access to some stage of education, or equal amounts of educational resources devoted to each individual. One may also use measures of educational achievement, in which case equality may imply unequal provision of resources. In more general social terms, equality may be measured by the level of income, or by some status ranking of positions in society. Probably no one would advocate 'absolute equality' in terms of the educational measures mentioned above, and many would reject 'absolute equality' also in terms of the social criteria mentioned. Yet one often finds wide agreement that in relation to a specific initial situation 'more equality' in one or more of those terms might be desirable. Although not seen as an absolute good, more equality may thus be interpreted in ways which make it a meaningful political objective.

The various measures of equality, as exemplified above, are not, however, more or less ambitious ways of stating the same objective. To some extent they reflect different ideas about what criteria should be paid most attention in the context of equality. Examining this question further, we will easily find that such divergences in views are fairly widespread. We simply disagree fundamentally on what the relevant criteria are according to which equality ought to be measured. There is nothing mysterious about this. It simply reflects the fact that individuals have different preference structures and different ideas about what constitutes the good life.

School in itself is relevant, interesting and even delightful to some, irrelevant, boring and hateful to others. How such reactions are distributed is, of course, a consequence of what is being taught and how it is taught. Prolonged schooling is more meaningful to a youngster aspiring to become a medical doctor than to youngsters aiming at work as fishermen, craftsmen or skilled workers. As the latter do not necessarily feel frustrated that they are not going to become medical doctors, their choices may actually reflect their preferences. And quite naturally, such preferences are closely related to the values held in the social environment from which the youngsters come.

In work life, money income is surprisingly often substituted for by other values.

The most striking example is still the extensive absence from the labour market, especially among women. Furthermore, the correlation between high income and attractiveness of jobs seems fairly low in many countries, especially in those having enjoyed a long period of full employment and no monopoly-oriented restrictions to access to advanced education. It may appear that this lack of correlation is increasing, especially among the young. The actual development of demand for different types of education is only vaguely related to economic expectations; it cannot be explained unless non-economic variables are introduced. Such individual differences in preference structures are clearly related to many of the typical 'groups' studied in the context of educational equality. Women deviate basically from men in their choice of education, and in the choice of future careers. This can partly be explained by the conditions governing the situation of the two sexes in our society, but a full explanation needs the assumption of rather basic differences in underlying value structures. The same applies to youth from different social strata, and from various geographical areas. Specific ethnic characteristics and religious adherence may also lead to substantial differences in preference structures, reflected in educational and vocational choices.

Such differences were clearly brought out already in the famous debate between Robert Merton and Herbert Hyman in the early fifties on the universality versus class specificity of success values.[1] But while that debate mainly focused on different levels of ambition, later evidence points to the existence of even more fundamental differences in underlying values. Such differences in value structures, combined with variations in general conditions influencing preferences, must necessarily produce quite different reactions to the same kind of education. It is often suggested that our educational systems of today largely reflect middle-class values, increasingly biased towards elitist technocratic ideas at the higher levels. Whether or not this is true, education cannot in any case be everything to everyone. In some educational-technology-based fantasies individualized teaching should provide every individual with exactly what he or she needs. But this again presupposes a common agreement on what individual needs are, while we have just pointed out the differences in preference structures, which by necessity must be reflected in ideas about needs. Furthermore, the more extreme ideas about individualized teaching neglect the fact that, to a very great extent, education is a social phenomenon. The social setting of learning cannot in most cases be differentiated according to individual preferences.

Thus, whatever we do, education will tend to favour certain groups and discriminate against others: not only, and perhaps even not primarily, in terms of the resources devoted to each individual, but in terms of what it teaches and the way teaching is performed. If we want to examine the extent to which education diminishes, maintains or reinforces inequality, we shall have to look at least as much for such qualitative factors as for the measures of educational attainment usually studied in traditional sociology. In particular, we have to realize that preference structures among those who perform badly in school, according to its traditional criteria, may well deviate strongly from those of the successful pupils. A school oriented towards performance as defined by the school itself will per definition concern itself primarily with the successful performers. The less successful will thus not only be offered an education not adapted to their needs, but will be placed in an educational situation which makes it less likely that they can benefit from what is being offered.

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[1] Robert K. Merton, 'Social structure and anomie', in Robert K. Merton, *Social theory and social structure*, New York, Free Press, 1949 and Herbert H. Hyman, 'The value system of different classes', in R. Bendix and S. M. Lipset, *Class, status and power*, Glencoe, Ill., Free Press, 1953.

A school emphasizing other aspects of human development than the purely cognitive ones will find that the ranking of children according to performance changes substantially. Many low achievers, in cognitive terms, will perform very well on other essential human dimensions, provided that they have not become too milieu-damaged in cognitively oriented schools. A school serving a variety of purposes, related both to the development of individual pupils as well as to the development of the pupils as a group, will find the measurement and ranking of individual performance a rather meaningless exercise. This is why examinations and marking have been abandoned within parts of the school system in some countries. It offers at least an opportunity for the 'less talented' in traditional school terms to experience a non-discriminatory school. The fact that examinations and marks are so strongly defended in many countries, and by strong social groups, serves to illustrate the importance attached to the selection function of the school, and its function as a preserver of inequalities in society.

Measuring inequality is thus no objective, scientific exercise. It presupposes a selection of specific criteria regarded as more relevant than others, and such a selection can only be made on a normative basis. Most research in this field implicitly, and without questioning, accepts the criteria preferred by predominant groups in society. Surprisingly often, criteria held more relevant, by groups discriminated against, are neglected in such research. Thus, in some sense, every researcher in this field is a partisan, deciding at least implicitly on which side he is.

Equality and social mobility

The groups we have mentioned—social, geographical, ethnic, religious, sexual, etc.—often deviate from the average in terms of 'success' in education or in society at large. It is often assumed that, if only such groups could obtain the same proportion of 'successes' as others, the society will have made major progress in equality. At best, such assumptions must be qualified. In some important respects, they are probably quite wrong. The latter may well be true in the case of inequalities between social classes. Especially in the Anglo-Saxon sociological tradition, the degree of intergenerational mobility between the classes is often regarded as a measure of equality or inequality. Thus, if children from the working class increase their chances of achieving university degrees, this is regarded as a sign of increased equality.

It may not be accidental that this concept of equality seems to be most firmly rooted in an American research tradition. It comes close to the idea that everyone should have equally great—or small—chances of becoming a millionaire. In countries where large social groups, such as farmers and industrial workers, have been able to organize effectively, and thus articulate their own interests, such notions of equality are more rare. Social equality is then seen in terms of the difference in living conditions between the major social groups in society. Such differences are definitely related to educational policies, but hardly in a way illustrated by data on social mobility.

In many countries, and to a Norwegian it comes natural to mention particularly the Scandinavian, the most important political event of the nineteenth century was the organization of the large farming population into effective political pressure groups. This broke the political dominance of the upper classes and the urbanized middle class and led to the breakthrough of parliamentary democracy. It is quite clear that such popular movements would have been impossible without extensive educational efforts in rural areas, often in schools fairly well controlled by the rural population itself. Correspondingly, the emergence of a strong and effectively organized labour movement in the twentieth century would have been unthinkable without the spread of basic education for everyone that preceded it. Thus educational expansion has been a decisive factor behind the emergence of political forces causing substantial progress towards more equal societies.

Yet the role of social mobility in such historical developments is a rather dubious one. Well-educated sons of farmers sometimes became the leaders of co-operative economic organizations for farmers, and they were also useful in their political organizations. More frequently, however, advanced education for the children of farmers meant that they left agriculture and lost all contact with the group they came from. For working-class children, the latter may be even more typical. For those in the labour movement, the idea of maximizing the chances of their children to become university graduates has always been very far from their concept of equality. On the contrary, there has been great scepticism towards education of the kind that offers bright youngsters chances to escape their social milieu and join other social strata. By draining the labour movement of its potential leaders, social mobility may sometimes contribute negatively to the development of more equal societies.

Studies on social mobility, the role of education in this context, and its development over time thus cover just one aspect of the question of education and equality, and probably not the most essential one. Fundamental misunderstandings of the education–equality relationship have in fact resulted from conclusions drawn on the basis of material on social mobility. Jencks's study on education and the following debate is one example, and most of the conclusions drawn in OECD material on similar subjects in the early 1970s provide others.

A less misleading approach to the same issues would have to bring in the way in which education, and specifically education for new broad groups of the population, has created necessary conditions for the emergence of new political forces, which in turn have been able to change basic social injustices in society. And this is not only history. In some of our countries, we seem to have reached the point where decisive moves are being made towards worker control of a major part of the economic life. If such control is to become a reality, it is fundamentally dependent upon the educational level of the workers. It is not only a question of worker representatives gaining sufficient knowledge to exert effective control functions. Even more so, it is a matter of the general educational level of the work-force as a whole. There is already an abundance of examples of worker representation made fictitious by the gradual alienation of a few worker representatives from those they represent. Educating a workers' élite is thus not a solution to the problem of industrial democracy.

It should be mentioned that similar problems have been predominant in the organization of farmers and fishers around their essential interests. In many countries, especially in the Third World, this is a fundamental problem for the years ahead. But examining the real relationships between education and equality, and sorting out the social-mobility issue in this context, cannot be fully fruitful until we drop the assumption that education is something given, where the question is only whether there is more or less of it. We must link a deeper understanding of the historical context of the education–equality relationship to our knowledge of prevailing differences in value structures and preference scales in different social groups.

The two dimensions of equality

Whatever the education offered, it will function differently in terms of the capabilities and interests of different groups in society, and their feeling of what is relevant to them. In the more extreme cases, groups may feel that education imposes upon them values that are quite foreign, and contrary to their own. Minority groups may feel that an education aiming primarily at the fastest possible assimilation of their children into the mainstream of the surrounding society is a threat to their identity as a minority group. Labour-class youth may find middle-class dominated curricula and teaching staffs rather irrelevant to their interests and aspirations. Women may experience certain forms of education as indoctrination in value structures fully determined by male premises. Rural children may experience school as primarily an introduction to an urban culture, explicitly or implicitly presented as superior to their own.

Thus the question of equality in educational terms cannot simply be seen as a matter of acquiring as much education as anyone else. Equally important are the value premises on which education is based, and its relationship to one's own interests and values. For all groups in society, access to influence and control over education, its content and methods, is an as important dimension of equality with other groups as any quantitative measure of educational attainment.

If equal participation in education by different groups is to have any meaning as a measure of equality in educational terms, a precondition must be that the groups also have an equal share in deciding what education shall be about. Fairly regularly, such a condition is not fulfilled in our countries. In most countries teacher recruitment is strongly biased in favour of the middle class. Minorities are usually under-represented. There may be a quantitative dominance of women, but most of the higher positions are held by men.

Teachers, however, are often only executors of a teaching material with principles developed elsewhere. We then have to look for pedagogical experts, with university background, and usually firmly rooted in an elitist research milieu. Genuine lay influence on the schools at the local level is relatively rare, and when it happens the local representation is frequently dominated by the well-educated and well-to-do, with children successful in school.

As to the examinations, requirements are often strongly influenced by representatives of the economy, regularly dominated by employers or successful representatives of high-status professional groups. Such representation is sure to be dominated by males, and biased towards urban occupations.

Most groups less favourably placed in society have developed some organizational and political strength, and they have produced articulate spokesmen. This is even true for the handicapped, although the so-called 'less talented' are mostly among the quiet in society. Yet such group representatives have till now rarely gained genuine influence in school matters. Certain groups, particularly with religious and ethnic connotations, and also groups of handicapped, have achieved separate educational institutions, presumably more in correspondence with their own needs and interests. However, institutional pecking orders may easily reduce the benefits associated with such separate institutions. Institutional segregation often invites discrimination in other life situations. The fight between different groups for influence of the school is thus not settled just by letting each group have its particular share of the total educational enterprise.

In traditional Marxist theory, exploitation of specific groups may be measured by the value added in the production processes. Even in economics, this concept of exploitation has grown too narrow, as it excludes the phenomenon of exploitation in the sector of non-marketed services, which by now constitute the major part of the economy in many industrialized countries. The traditional distinction between 'productive' and 'unproductive' work has lost most of its meaning in this context.

Questions of equality are to a great extent concerned with the possibilities of certain individuals and groups to use others as instruments for their own purposes. Such possibilities may be seen as an extended form of exploitation. As in many of our industrialized societies the traditional form of economic exploitation has become greatly modified and the more intangible, non-economic forms of exploitation may have become far more important.

In an educational context, exploitation would mean that individuals and groups are educated according to value structures and interests that are not their own. When groups are subject to exploitation in this form on a major scale, the most important aspect of equality may *not* be whether they get as much education as other groups.[1] To a great extent, the struggle for equality in education is a fight between different groups for control over its nature. But as such control inevitably involves the exploitation of other groups, it is also a matter of who exploits whom.

The complicating factor here is that by abandoning the traditional Marxist concept of exploitation, we also lose an apparently objective way of measuring the degree of exploitation.[2] Realizing that the field of education cannot be de-

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1. Before the arrival of Columbus, the Seminole tribes in the south-east of what later became the U.S.A. were literate and had an organized educational system. Today, in remote corners of Arkansas, some remnants of the Seminole tribes distinguish themselves by refusing to send their children to school. In rather extreme terms, this may illustrate that equality in education terms is more than the right to attend school.
2. The objectivity of such measurements is in any case fictitious, unless one believes that value established by market transactions represents an 'objective' value structure.

scribed by a nice neat harmony model, according to which the basic interests of parties involved are the same, we must also avoid the opposite falsification of education reality, to assume that it can be described by an absolute conflict model. The latter model implies that the interested parties are playing a zero-sum game, in which no one can win unless someone else loses. The fact is that, as in most other fields, education offers wide possibilities for compromise solutions, providing some benefits for several parties, without necessarily implying losses for anyone. The question of whose interests are being served by specific educational measures quite frequently has no objective answer. We are dealing with parties operating on the basis of different value structures. The account of gains and losses according to one such structure will differ from that of another. We may thus have situations where several parties all feel that they are being exploited by the others, or where several parties feel that they have succeeded in exploiting others.[1]

Researchers wanting to examine equality issues sometimes find it hard to face a situation in which there is no objective answer to the question of who is being exploited, and to what extent. Some are honest about it, stating simply that, since conclusions may differ according to the value structures of the different parties, they will draw conclusions based on their own personal value structure.[2] Others implicitly do the same, camouflaging the subjective judgements involved, while again others fall back on quantifiable, apparently objective measures of market value, thus ignoring most of the actual exploitation that takes place.

This lack of objective yardsticks for the measurement of injustice, well known from welfare theory, does not, however, mean that research efforts are futile. Quite the contrary, research could bring out essential aspects of the equality question, provided that problems are posed in a fruitful way. Maybe one useful approach could be to trace the more extreme forms of exploitation, when weaker groups actually find it necessary to adopt the value structure of a stronger party as a basis for their own negotiations with that party. We know the classical case of the slaves adopting the slave-owners' ideology. Quite often, assimilation of minority groups has similar connotations. And what, after all, is the main content of the socialization function of the school?

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1. The latter simply means, in less sophisticated terms, that all feel that they have made a good bargain.
2. As does Johan Galtung in his 'Structural theory on violence'.

Segregation and integration

Disregarding questions of objective measurement, pragmatic political solutions imply a balance of influence somewhat in accordance with the political strength of different groups, occasionally coupled with a certain generosity towards the weakest. But how this can best be done raises major questions. Traditionally the solution has often been found in passing out parts of the total educational enterprise to the various parties concerned. We have separate schools for boys and girls, schools for the children of workers separate from those of middle-class parents, rural schools that are different from the urban ones, schools with different religious connotations and schools dominated by specific ethnic groups. As pointed out before, this has proved to be no guarantee against discrimination. Quite often, the attendance of segregated schools of this kind may in itself form the basis of social stigmatization.

Recent years have seen a wave of interest in integration, and strong reactions against segregation in institutional terms. Schools have become bisexual, and binary school systems have been abandoned in favour of more comprehensive structures. Special schools for handicapped children have been closed down and their pupils integrated into ordinary schools. Ethnic groups have been mixed, even when it has meant, for example, transport to schools at some distance. Quite often, this movement towards integration has been borne by a strong reaction against discriminatory practices.

The evidence we have indicates that some expectations based on the assumed non-discriminatory nature of integrated institutions may well be disappointed. There are signs that we may experience the pendulum swinging back the other way. Some of the most engaged advocates of minority-group interests have come to the conclusion that institutional segregation may serve their group interests best. This is true for ethnic and religious groups, and sometimes for geographical areas. Similar thoughts can be found among the more devoted feminists, and among advocates for certain groups of handicapped. The reasons for this should be fairly clear from the previous analyses in this paper. If 'integration' means 'assimilation', or simply being adapted to 'mainstream' behaviour patterns as far as possible, it clearly undermines the identity of any special group. It also means that the possibilities for the latter to defend its own values disappear, for it has no other choice left than to adapt whatever value structures dominate the 'mainstream' groups.

The outcome of 'integration', in this form, may be the complete disappearance of the group as a separate entity. For the groups distinguished by sex, colour or visible handicaps, it may just mean that their problems become less visible, and less troublesome to others. In educational as well as other contexts this cannot be accepted as genuine integration. Such integration would imply not only the breakdown of institutional barriers between different groups but also a change in the value structure dominating integrated institutions. It is not only a question of adapting to 'mainstream' behaviour; 'mainstream' value structures must be changed to accommodate the values of those integrated.

Thus, integrating handicapped children into an ordinary school may need more of a change in attitudes and behaviour among the 'normal' children, and the teachers, than for the handicapped child. Genuine integration of ethnic minority groups not only means a formal acceptance of the cultural values held by that group, but a basic change in the value structure of the predominant culture. Genuine comprehensive education, ending the separation between educational institutions for the children of different classes, cannot imply the establishment of a school dominated by traditional middle-class values, or the values primarily found in the theoretical disciplines of academic study. Unless a profound change of the content and methods takes place, the comprehensive nature of new integrated institutions is fictitious. Correspondingly, integrated education for the two sexes must take into account the existence of an at least partly distinguishable feminine culture, which must shape the school as much as the traditionally dominant male values.

The frequency of organizational and institutional integration without the changes in predominant value structures required by genuine integration underlies the reactions we see against the recent trend towards more integrated social and institutional structures. From the point of view of equality, segregated institutional solutions are nearly always a second best. They may be temporarily needed in order to build up the identity, and thus the bargaining strength, of weaker parties. In the long run, however, integrated solutions probably offer the only acceptable answer to the quest for equality.

Yet this implies what we have called *genuine* integration. Formal integration, without the necessary changes in value structures, justifies claims for segregated defence mechanisms for the weaker groups. In other words, we have to learn the social techniques needed to minimize exploitation in organizational and institutional settings. There is no doubt that such an aim offers a tremendous potential for relevant research. I hope it will help us to escape from the rather narrow and often misleading research approaches to equality problems which have dominated the field during the last decade or so.

Fresh obstacles facing policies aimed at reducing educational inequalities

François Orivel

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The fundamental problem of educational equality

The problem of equality in the area of education has become one of the major preoccupations of our time. A very large proportion of the literature on educational sociology is concerned with analysing the numerous kinds of inequality between individuals with regard to their access to education, their success within the system and the recognition of their educational attainments by the world of work. We can cite at random such inequalities as those based on sex, social background, the area in which one lives, race, the country, the period, language, religion, aptitudes, the general environment, conditions in the home, political sympathies, one's position in the family, the size of the family, parents' income, their age, etc. The underlying premise is that such inequalities, whatever their form, produce a social situation which is worse than strict equality. In the literature on the subject, there are no (or very few) studies which would tend to show that there is an optimal level of inequality compared to which the existing level of inequality is either too great or too small. Either implicitly or explicitly, the accepted premise is that inequalities should be remedied. The only notable exception to this is the highly controversial question of *abilities*. Those who subscribe to the belief that such natural, ineradicable inequalities do exist consider that inequality ceases once one has reached the position where, for individuals with apparent equal ability, the causes of inequality mentioned above no longer apply. There are those who contest the validity of this argument on the grounds that there is no precise way in which these natural differences in ability can be determined, since the differences that are measured are always biased both by the method of measurement (tests are never completely impartial) and by the influence of the environment on the development of abilities, right from one's earliest years.

In other words, there is a 'terra incognita', a grey area, where it is impossible to decide at what precise point inequalities observed in the area of education cease to be inequitable because they are the outcome of ineradicable inequalities of ability or whether they still constitute forms of discrimination which society can and must strive to eliminate.

There is a further twilight zone in the measurement of inequalities due to the diversification of the educational system beyond a certain level. For instance, does the fact that out of every hundred women ten get arts degrees and five qualify as doctors, whereas out of every hundred men five get arts degrees and ten qualify as doctors, denote a form of sex discrimination? One has in fact to weigh the arguments on both sides, i.e. if one considers that a doctor's higher earnings compensate for the greater prestige of an arts degree, one will not regard this as discrimination; if, however, one does not share this opinion, one will tend to see this as a form of inequality.[1]

Nevertheless, from a quick glance at the literature on the subject, it is apparent that inequality is seen from the viewpoint of the choices of an élite (or dominant class) and, to a certain extent, the behaviour patterns of this élite serve as a yardstick to measure whether inequalities exist or not.

In fact, what is important is that these behaviour patterns decide who shall have access to power, and the privileged classes are in a better position than the others to succeed in these codes of behaviour which they themselves partly determine. In other words, to condemn inequalities in education is an indirect way of challenging the methods for transmitting power and the higher positions in society which constitute the so-called process of *reproduction,* which has been so precisely described by the French sociologist Bourdieu. One of the most effective ways used by the élite to ensure its own reproduction, i.e. that the reins of power are handed on to its descendants, is to exercise control over the 'aristocratic' educational streams. Generally speaking, the authors who tend to subscribe to this theory of reproduction also tend to be those who are most suspicious of the theory of natural differences in ability. They believe that effective action to assist those who are said to lack ability would considerably reduce the educational disparities arising from these differences in natural ability. It is obvious that this school of thought, whose views we tend to share, has a vision of an education system which is relatively unselective and capable of accepting, at every level, a similar proportion from each group to that from the more privileged social categories.

However, this idea finds itself faced with a problem of resources. It would in fact appear increasingly unlikely that such requirements could, in the foreseeable future, be met from the public funds allocated to education—which leads us to question the system of free post-compulsory education, both in the developed as well as in the developing countries.

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1. We are deliberately ignoring the complex and ill-defined role of demand in all this. It is possible in fact that women prefer an arts degree to a medical qualification (and men the reverse) for reasons of social conditioning from which one cannot exclude the mechanisms of male domination which form part of a policy of inequality in its broadest sense. But how much is spontaneous choice and how much conditioning? What are 'good' differences and what are bad? Whatever the case, we hesitate to set foot on such dangerous ground.

The extent to which inequalities have been reduced in recent years

Without doubt, of all the various forms of discrimination analysed with regard to education the one which is given pride of place in the literature on the subject is the individual's social background. The terms used to define social categories or social classes differ from one country to another, but they all differentiate clearly between, on the one hand, those with 'top' jobs and workers and farmers on the other.

Measuring inequalities is done by calculating the difference in probabilities of access to a given level between underprivileged classes and privileged classes. Reducing inequalities means reducing this difference. One could imagine a reduction of inequalities occurring as the result of a simultaneous drop in the case of more privileged classes and an increase for the less privileged classes. Generally speaking, this is not what has happened in recent years. The gap has been reduced by the less privileged classes, who have been catching up as their possibilities of access have increased at a faster rate than those of the more privileged classes.

Let us take France as an example and the inequalities in access to higher education in relation to the individual's social background. Statistics are available on an annual basis of all students attending higher educational establishments under the authority of the Ministry for Universities (i.e. over 80 per cent of the total enrolment in higher education); these statistics provide details of the student population and in particular their social background. If we take two very specific categories such as senior executives and liberal professions on the one hand (by far the most privileged category) and working-class families on the other hand, the trend has been as shown in Table 1.

It is interesting to compare the figures for these two categories with their size in relation to the total population (see Table 2). The breakdown of the student population compared with the breakdown of the total population shows that in 1962 a child from a privileged social background had 49 times as many chances of a university education as his working-class counterpart; by 1968, the ratio was no more than 23 and by 1975 it had fallen to 15. And finally, with the new intake in 1973/74, which reflects the overall breakdown for the years 1977/78, this ratio had dropped to 11. The drawback with these figures, which are the only ones that enable us to follow the trend in this inequality of access, is that they are not

TABLE 1. Share by category of student of total enrolment in higher educational establishments (universities only) in France, 1961/62, 1968/69, 1975/76 and (new intake only) 1973/74

Category	Number and percentage	1961/62	1968/69	1975/76	1973/74 New intake only
Liberal professions, senior executives	Number	73 400	202 000	254 600	42 300
	Percentage	31.5	35.1	33.2	29.9
Workers	Number	13 700	65 000	97 400	21 800
	Percentage	5.9	11.3	12.7	15.4
Total students	Number	233 000	575 400	767 000	141 530
	Percentage	100	100	100	100

Source: F. Orivel, in: Millot-Orivel, 'L'Allocation des ressources dans l'enseignement supérieur français' (The Allocation of Resources in French Higher Education), Dijon University, 1976 (doctoral thesis).

TABLE 2. Comparison of the two categories by size in relation to the total population in France, 1962, 1968, 1975 and (first year) 1973/74

Category	Number and percentage	1962	1968	1975	1973/74 First year
Liberal professions, senior executives	Number	766 000	1 052 000	1 459 000	
	Percentage	3.98	5.15	6.70	
Workers	Number	7 051 000	7 699 000	8 208 000	
	Percentage	36.7	37.7	37.7	
Ratio of university percentage to population percentage:					
Liberal professions, senior executives		7.9	6.8	4.96	4.46
Workers		0.16	0.30	0.34	0.41
Ratio of privileged versus non-privileged individuals' possibilities of access		49	23	15	11

weighted to take into account either the average number of children per family for each social category or the age factor. For instance, the category 'Senior Executives/Liberal Professions' is known to have a higher average age than the 'Worker' category and therefore more likely to have children of an age to be in higher education than the 'Worker' category. A certain number of workers in the 18–30 age bracket, who have no children of university age, will have changed their social category by the time their children have reached such an age. Conversely, the status of senior executive is acquired only after a certain length of time and precisely when one's children have grown up. If one weights the figures for the probability of access so as to make allowance for these two factors—which can be done using data derived from a longitudinal survey of student cohorts—

this ratio can be divided by two.[1] In other words, at the present time, a working-class child has roughly five times fewer chances of gaining access to higher education than a child from a more privileged social background. If differences in ability are taken into account, measured in terms of IQ (data derived from the same survey) then this ratio drops to about three.[2]

It is therefore undeniable that there has been in recent years a spectacular reduction in the inequalities of access to higher education based on the individual's social background. We have shown elsewhere[2] that this progress has been primarily due to the generalization, during this period, of access to secondary education, which decides who enters for the *baccalauréat,* which in turn determines the possibility of entry into higher education. However, this democratization of secondary education has by now had all its effects on the access to higher education and, after expanding at an unprecedented rate, enrolment in higher education has now levelled off. The possibilities of reducing this ratio of 1 to 3 or 1 to 5 (depending on whether one takes into account differences in ability) are practically non-existent.

We do not have the space here to make a detailed analysis of what is happening in other countries. However, from a rapid examination of the facts, it seems that a similar situation has occurred in all the developed countries. The levels of enrolment in higher education have risen at a spectacular rate over the past twenty-five years, mainly to the benefit of the social classes at the lower end of the scale since the levels for the privileged classes have changed little over this period. However, in recent years, this growth trend has suddenly begun to slow down and currently it is not expected that these levels will show any further significant change. These enrolment levels range between 15 and 45 per cent depending on whether the education policy has been to expand short-term higher education (the higher levels) or to retain an élitist system (the lower levels). One notes, for example, that in most of the developed socialist countries, the level of enrolment in higher education has, for more than ten years, been stabilized at a figure which ranges, depending on the country, from 15 to 25 per cent.

It is therefore likely that, in the absence of any major institutional change, the present inequalities will remain unchanged and one will no longer be able to count on the expansion of the system and an increase in enrolment levels to continue to reduce these disparities.

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[1] There is only one longitudinal survey of this kind, i.e. one carried out by INED (Institut National des Études Démographiques—National Institute of Demographic Studies) on a sample of 17,000 pupils enrolling in their first year of secondary education in 1962.

[2] See Millot-Orivel, op. cit.

A new obstacle in the struggle—limitations on resources

When one looks at the trend in expenditures on education, expressed as a percentage of GNP, one notes that worldwide this has risen from 3.75 per cent in 1960 to 5.45 per cent in 1974. If one terms this percentage the 'effort' devoted to education, this effort can be said to have increased by 44 per cent over this period (cf. Table 3).

TABLE 3. Percentage of GNP allocated to education (public expenditure) and trend in enrolment levels in the major regions of the world

Region	Percentage of GNP for education			Enrolment level		
	1960	1974	Increase	1960	1975	Increase
Africa	2.66	4.15	56	19.5	32.6	67
Latin America	2.37	4.25	79	37.4	54.8	47
Asia[1]	2.73	3.97	45	27.3	38.0	39
North America	3.86	6.58	70	79.3	80.4	1.4
Europe[2]	4.20	5.37	28	57.8	68.6	19
Oceania	2.98	6.32	112	61.2	63.6	4
Developed countries	4.01	5.68	42	62.5	69.9	12
Developing countries	2.33	3.94	69	27.3	39.7	45
WORLD TOTAL	3.78	5.45	44	40.1	48.9	22

1. Excluding Japan, China and Republic of Korea.
2. Including U.S.S.R.

Sources: GNP percentage: Eicher-Orivel, *L'Allocation des ressources à l'éducation dans le monde 1960–1974* (The allocation of resources to education throughout the world 1960–1974), Paris, Unesco, Statistical Office, 1978.
Enrolment levels: Unesco, *Trends and projections of enrolment by level of education and by age*, Paris, 1977.

Over this same period total enrolment world wide, all levels of education combined, rose from 40.1 per cent to 48.9 per cent, i.e. an increase of 22 per cent or only half that of the resources.

How should this trend be interpreted in terms of productivity? In another

TABLE 4. The elasticity of expenditure on education in relation to GNP between 1960 and 1974

Region	Period		
	1960/65	1965/70	1970/74
Africa (excluding Arab States)	1.80	1.77	1.26
Arab States	1.38	1.49	1.07
North America	2.51	2.29	1.00
Latin America	2.09	1.38	1.79
Asia (excluding Arab States)	1.75	1.04	1.22
Europe (including U.S.S.R.)	1.70	1.12	1.04
Oceania	1.77	2.00	1.67
Developed countries	1.90	1.46	1.01
Developing countries	2.29	1.64	1.43
WORLD TOTAL	1.98	1.48	1.04

Source: Eicher-Orivel, op. cit.

context[1] we have put forward the hypothesis that, on average, there has been no improvement in productivity with regard to the provision of educational services. The cost of labour is, in fact, by far the most important element and, in each country, teachers' salaries more or less follow the growth in per capita GNP, which means that they benefit from the average increase in productivity within the economy without contributing directly to it. If there has been no increase in productivity for the provision of educational services, a constant level of effort results in a constant quantity of services provided, i.e. a constant level of enrolment. An increase of *x* per cent in the effort would mean that the enrolment level could be raised by *x* per cent. However, here we have an increase in effort which is greater than the increase in enrolment rates. There are two factors which explain this difference:

The more rapid increase of those educational levels which are the most expensive per student, i.e. secondary and higher education.

The improvement in the 'quality' of educational services (better teacher/student ratios, better working conditions, more highly qualified staff).

Only Africa shows an increase in effort of a similar scale to the increase in the level of enrolment, which would imply that it was unable to make any substantial improvement in the quality of educational services and that the structure by levels has changed very little. It will be seen that Asia's position is scarcely better than that of Africa in this respect and also that progress has been slower.

Consequently, it is unlikely that present enrolment levels could be increased without an at least equivalent increase in the effort.

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[1] F. Orivel, 'Conséquences économiques des perspectives de développement de la scolarisation dans les pays en voie de développement' (The Economic Consequences of the Long-term Prospects for the Development of Education in Developing Countries) in R. Avakov (ed.), *The future of education*, Oxford, Pergamon Press (in preparation).

However, what is the position? When we compare the growth in GNP with the growth in expenditure on education, the trend is not very encouraging. The elasticity of expenditures has dropped from a world average of 2 for the period 1960–1975 to 1.5 for 1965–1970 and close to 1 for 1970–1974 (see Table 4).

There has therefore been a rapid slow-down in the growth of the effort, which suggests the hypothesis that expenditure tends to level off at around 7 or 8 per cent of GNP. This slow-down makes it extremely doubtful whether in some countries, particularly those in Africa, education will continue to expand and it suggests that we should be looking for possible alternatives implying a different order of priority.

How fair is the allocation of resources by level of education?

In the second section of this paper we saw that, in the case of the developed countries, there seem to be limits to the reduction of inequalities in access to higher education. In the third section we showed that, with regard to the public resources allocated to education, a process of rapid slow-down had begun and that it would be fairly unrealistic to count on an increase in the productivity of educational services to offset the slower rate of increase in resources. We would now like to draw attention to some of the more questionable systems of education and in particular the share of resources given to higher education in certain countries, and suggest some alternative and fairer ways of financing it.

Questionable systems

The Eicher-Orivel report already mentioned contains certain data relating to public expenditure per student or per pupil for the different educational levels and covering a fairly broad sample of countries. This information is not complete—it only concerns operating costs and excludes capital expenditure and it is not entirely compatible. However, despite this, in our opinion it does give a reasonable indication of the amounts involved.

The most astounding figures are those for Africa where expenditures per primary-school pupil are the lowest in the world and expenditures per student in higher education the highest. The latter in fact costs 59 times as much as the primary-school pupil, whereas this ratio is only 1 : 9 in Latin America, 1 : 6 in Asia, 1 : 2.5 in Europe and 1 : 1.5 in North America. From the point of view of educational equality one may well question the underlying philosophy of a system which accepts that a student in higher education, whose family is generally not without means, should be allocated an amount equivalent to what it would cost to give primary schooling to 59 children deprived of any kind of formal education.

Whether the country be poor or rich, when its system is one in which inequalities of access are likely to be long-lasting, which is biased in favour of the privileged classes and in which public resources can no longer increase at a rate sufficient to raise overall levels of enrolment substantially, then it is high time to take a serious look at some possible alternatives.

TABLE 5. Public expenditure on primary and higher education (excluding capital expenditure), enrolment and expenditure per capita

Countries by group and by continent		Primary education			Higher education		
		Expenditure (million U.S.$, 1974)	Number of pupils (thousands)	Expenditure per pupil (U.S.$, 1974)	Expenditure (million U.S.$, 1974)	Number of students (thousands)	Expenditure per student (U.S.$, 1974)
Groups of countries							
Africa		1 045.6	20 742	50.4	420.3	142.1	2 958.0
United States, Canada		59 008.4	34 026	1 734.2	29 061.6	10 915.0	2 662.0
Other American States		3 752.2	43 116	87.0	1 814.1	2 395.6	757.0
Asia		8 042.1	102 126	78.7	2 832.2	5 [illegible]95.7	556.0
Europe		16 836.0	30 685	549.3	12 361.3	9 182.1	1 346.2
Oceania		230.7	709	325.4	149.2	67.9	2 197.3
WORLD TOTAL		88 935.0	231 402	384.3	46 603.7	27 798.4	1 677.7
Africa							
Algeria	1970	214.4	1 887	113.6	35.97	19.5	1 844
Benin	1971	7.30	188	38.8	1.61	1.1	1 463
Botswana	1974	4.40	104	42.3	1.35	0.3	4 500
Burundi	1970	3.66	182	20.1	0.35	0.5	200
Central African Republic	1969	7.15	170	42.1	0.57	0.1	5 700
Chad	1969	5.42	162	33.5	—	—	—
Congo	1974	11.98	407	39.0	4.68	2.6	2 569
Ethiopia	1974	21.12	959	22.0	—	—	—
Gambia	1974	0.69	22	31.4	—	—	—
Guinea	1969	8.52	179	47.6	5.47	1.5	3 647
Ivory Coast	1974	54.52	402	135.4	27.41	6.2	4 420
Kenya	1972	64.60	1 676	38.5	15.03	8.4	1 789
Lesotho	1970	3.05	183	16.7	1.00	0.4	2 500
Madagascar	1973	23.78	1 037	22.9	5.34	7.0	763
Malawi	1974	6.93	612	10.5	3.29	1.1	2 990
Mali	1969	9.19	218	42.2	1.36	0.7	1 942
Mauritius	1974	9.40	152	41.8	1.40	1.4	1 000

Morocco	1973	117.1	1 338	87.5	21.77	25.5	854
Niger	1972	5.80	101	57.4	0.57	0.2	2 850
Nigeria	1973	169.81	4 662	36.4	185.7	23.2	7 982
Rwanda	1973	5.74	398	14.4	1.35	0.7	1 929
Senegal	1974	21.80	307	71.0	—	—	—
Somalia	1973	3.21	69	46.5	0.11	1.0	110
Sudan	1970	33.06	826	40.0	14.64	14.3	1 023
Swaziland	1974	2.23	86	25.9	1.28	0.3	4 267
Togo	1970	5.67	229	24.8	1.69	0.9	1 878
Tunisia	1974	81.20	911	89.1	37.89	12.1	3 131
Uganda	1970	33.42	720	46.4	14.03	4.2	3 345
United Republic of Cameroon	1970	24.24	923	26.3	9.41	2.7	3 485
United Republic of Tanzania	1971	33.93	922	36.8	10.36	2.2	4 709
Zambia	1973	52.87	810	65.3	15.12	4.0	3 780
America							
Canada	1973	2 708.4	2 612	1 036.9	2 661.6	692	3 846.2
United States	1974	56 300.0	31 414	1 792.2	26 400.0	10 223	2 582.4
Barbados	1973	6.21	35	177.4	—	1.4	—
Belize	1970	1.48	32	46.3	0.35	0.1	3 500
Costa Rica[1]	1970	26.5	349	75.9	5.44	15.5	351.0
Dominican Republic[1]	1972	18.5	833	22.2	12.4	34.5	359.4
El Salvador[1]	1970	20.3	531	39.2	7.49	9.5	788.4
Grenada[1]	1973	2.43	30	81.0	—	—	—
Guatemala	1970	22.9	506	45.3	5.44	15.6	348.7
Honduras[1]	1970	15.7	385	40.8	3.00	4.8	525.0
Jamaica	1974	44.6	379	117.7	21.5	8.4	2 559.5
Mexico	1974	1 154.5	11 026	104.7	275.5	409.7	674.1
Nicaragua	1970	12.9	285	45.3	2.24	9.4	238.3
Panama	1974	31.8	328	96.9	9.35	24.2	386
Trinidad and Tobago	1970	26.9	225	119.4	6.18	2.4	2 575.0
Argentina[1]	1974	40.5	3 571	123.4	259.8	497.7	522.0
Bolivia	1974	53.8	770	69.9	0.48	39.4	113.7
Brazil[1]	1973	1 167.6	14 886	78.4	604.5	785.2	770.2
Chile	1974	96.4	2 321	30.0	153.0	145.0	1 055.2

Continued overleaf

TABLE 5 *continued*

Countries by group and by continent		Primary education			Higher education		
		Expenditure (million U.S.$, 1974)	Number of pupils (thousands)	Expenditure per pupil (U.S.$, 1974)	Expenditure (million U.S.$, 1974)	Number of students (thousands)	Expenditure per student (U.S.$, 1974)
America continued							
Ecuador[1]	1971	34.4	1 057	32.5	8.13	43.7	186.1
Paraguay[1]	1970	2.6	424	29.3	3.17	8.1	331.4
Peru	1974	169.8	2 865	57.3	47.7	160.0	423.1
Uruguay[1]	1970	34.0	354	153.7	22.9	21.0	1 090.5
Venezuela[1]	1971	349.2	1 924	191.9	341.2	51.0	2 119.3
Asia							
Afghanistan	1974	8.26	644	12.8	4.07	11.0	370.0
Burma	1972	24.5	3 300	7.4	12.1	56.3	214.9
Cyprus	1974	11.9	57	208.8	1.18	0.6	1 966.7
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	1972	248.5	5 692	43.7	30.7	250.2	122.7
Hong Kong	1974	105.4	695	151.6	42.9	38.3	1 120.1
India	1973	838.4	60 641	13.8	246.8	2 230	110.7
Iran	1974	490.6	[illegible] 119	119.1	279.1	135.4	2 061.2
Iraq	1970	230.6	1 099	109.8	65.1	42.4	1 535.4
Israel	1970	316.5	481	658.0	130.5	55.5	2 351.4
Japan	1972	4 670.1	9 696	481.6	1 438.1	2 007.1	716.5
Kuwait	1974	106.0	102	1 235.3	25.9	5.8	4 465.5
Malaysia (West)	1973	190.8	1 522	125.4	54.5	23.2	2 349.2
Pakistan	1974	52.0	5 166	10.1	20.1	111.8	179.8
Qatar	1970	11.7	15	780	—	—	—
Saudi Arabia	1974	452.2	626	722.4	416.2	19.8	21 020.2
Singapore	1974	48.8	338	144.4	21.7	18.2	1 192.3
Sri Lanka	1974	11.4	1 388	8.21	3.4	14.7	244.2
Thailand	1974	204.4	6 543	31.2	39.7	75.4	526.5

Europe								
Austria	1974	324.9	513	633.3	206.2	8.1	2 451.8
Belgium	1973	654.3	942	694.6	182.5	148.6	2 574.0
Bulgaria	1974	322.6	977	330.2	84.9	127.3	666.9
Czechoslovakia	1974	1 153.7	1 884	612.4	449.2	144.3	3 113.0
Denmark	1974	1 244.3	560	2 222.0	573.2	105.4	3 540.8
Finland	1974	527.1	393	1 341.2	143.1	71.5	2 001.4
France	1974	1 682.6	4 724	356.2	1 237.5	939.0	1 211.4
Germany, Federal Republic of[1]	1974	3 594.7	6 500	553.0	2 014.3	730.0	2 759.3
Greece	1973	123.6	915	135.1	57.1	84.6	674.9
Hungary	1974	672.3	1 040	603.2	348.0	107.4	3 365.6
Ireland[1]	1974	121.3	402	301.7	68.2	37.9	1 799.5
Italy	1974	2 127.7	4 934	431.2	749.5	930.2	804.7
Netherlands	1973	917.8	1 455	630.8	1 104.6	250.0	4 419.4
Norway	1973	630.4	381	1 654.6	161.0	63.8	2 523.5
Portugal	1973	79.3	947	83.7	25.0	59.8	418.1
Sweden	1974	1 454.5	689	2 111.0	490.9	128.9	3 808.4
Switzerland	1974	540.3	562	941.4	320.5	42.6	5 119.8
U.S.S.R.	1974	—	—	—	4 021.3	4 751.0	846.4
Yugoslavia	1974	729.6	2 867	254.5	225.3	359.7	626.4

[1] Including pre-primary.

Sources: Eicher-Orivel, op. cit.

Some possible alternatives

Reducing per capita costs in higher education. One of the reasons for the high cost of the African student is the fact that most of the countries on this continent are very small, and there is no doubt that it was far too ambitious a project to attempt to set up a diversified system of university education in each one of them.

There are too few students per discipline for there to be any possibility of economies of scale and it would seem that, in this connection, the individual African States have not shown much willingness to co-operate. Since many of these African universities have not yet attained a critical size, the creation of new establishments needs to be subjected to stricter control. One way of making a reallocation of resources possible, provided the political support was forthcoming, would be to provide Africa with a system of 'non-resident' university education, which would not only eliminate the need for student grants, since students would continue to live at home, but also spread the very high cost of inviting professors and lecturers from European and North American universities and make it possible to disseminate at marginal cost teaching materials produced elsewhere, in particular for the non-resident university systems in Britain (Open University) or France.

It should perhaps be remembered that even some of the more wealthy countries are looking for ways to reduce their per capita costs—in particular in the United Kingdom where the question has been raised as to whether the expensive tutorial system should be maintained in its present form. France has already taken steps in this direction and, since 1969, expenditure per student has decreased every year.[1]

However, there is little to suggest that the same degree of urgency applies to the policy adopted by France as that which we have been stressing in the case of other countries. In fact, of all the developed countries, France is the one which allocates the lowest percentage of its GNP to higher education (two-and-a-half times less than the United Kingdom).

Increasing the amount of private financing. It is somewhat paradoxical that the poorer countries, where only a small privileged minority has access to higher education, should tend to have a more generous policy of aid to students than the richer countries. It is also paradoxical that a public service should continue to be provided free of charge when those who benefit from it are far from being the most needy members of society—and this also applies to the developed countries. The reply which is often made to this argument is that, if this service were not provided free, it would be even more difficult for the poorer classes to have access to it. This is by no means certain. A policy of high fees, close to the real cost, would provide the system with a new source of funds which would enable it to introduce a bold and effective scheme of aid for the less privileged students. It is possible that this too might prove counter-productive but, in this instance, it is not certain that a slow-down in the development of higher education in Africa would be a more serious drawback than the financial burden it currently represents. To end on a question: is it logical that a country should spend twenty to thirty times the per capita GNP figure to enable a student whose parents earn fifty to one hundred times this same figure to get a higher education, so that he too can later belong to this same category of people earning fifty to one hundred times the per capita GNP figure?

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[1] Cf. E.Orivel, 'Coût et financement de l'enseignement supérieur' (The Cost and Financing of Higher Education), in: Eicher-Levy Garboua (eds.), *Economique de l'éducation—Travaux français*, Economica, 1978.

Diminishing the returns from education. Inequality with regard to education is made all the more intolerable by the fact that it entails considerable inequalities in careers and incomes. Several Western European socialist countries have gone some way to solving this problem by modifying the wage and salary structure. If a doctor's earnings are not significantly more than those of a coal-miner, it is unquestionably less unfair for this miner that he should not have been deprived of the possibility of a higher education than in the case where, as still often applies in countries with a market economy, a doctor's earnings are several times those of a miner.

In other words, where it proves impossible or very difficult to equalize educational opportunities, this form of inequality can be made much less painful by substantially reducing the benefits derived from higher education, in particular by equalizing the level of earnings whatever the level of education, either by adopting the method used in socialist countries (i.e. pay scales fixed by the government) or by a strict fiscal policy (of the Swedish type).

Conclusions

The problems discussed in this report should be regarded more as matters for reflection than as categorical and definitive statements on our part. In fact, many of the data are incomplete and unreliable and call for more in-depth investigation. What to us seems vital in the evolution of education systems at the present time is the fact that we have entered into a new phase of development profoundly different from the one we knew during the twenty-five to thirty years following the Second World War. We then became accustomed to a continuous and simultaneous expansion of all the sectors in terms of both resources and manpower, and it has to be admitted that this expansion concealed or postponed the need to examine, analyse and resolve a number of problems which remain unchanged today and which will need to be tackled in a lucid and logical manner and without prejudice or emotion. This report was intended to do no more than underline this need.

Inequalities in education and inequalities in employment

Louis Emmerij

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Education and equal opportunities

The title of this paper can be interpreted in several ways. It can be viewed in the first place as another way of asking the question whether education is responsible for employment problems both in developed and in industrialized countries. In the second place, one might deduce from the title that there is a relationship between inequalities in education on the one hand and inequalities in employment opportunities on the other. In the third place such a title could very well mean that inequalities between regions, between the sexes and between urban and rural areas are as important as inequalities between social classes, and have all kinds of implications for the greater or lesser abundance of job opportunities.

The *leitmotiv* of this paper is the identification of the role and responsibility of education in employment problems and, on the basis of this diagnosis, a presentation of a societal vision within which education may well play a somewhat more active and effective role in tackling the employment problem than it has so far done.

There has always been tension between the societal needs for educational skills and the individual's aspiration to more and more education. In such centrally planned economies as those of Eastern Europe, the expansion of education goes hand in hand with the expansion of the economy and more particularly with changes in technology, which in turn has implications for the occupational structure of the labour force. In other words, in such systems one tries to realize a one-to-one relationship between the output of the educational system at its different levels and the required intake of the economy in terms of a whole range of skills and qualifications.

Advocates of such rigid manpower plans claim that this does not entail a contradiction with the objective of equality of educational opportunity because they believe that equality of *educational* opportunity means nothing without equality of *occupational* and *income* opportunity. This brings us straight to the very core of this paper's subject. Indeed, advocates of manpower planning would argue that given the continuous technological changes that are anticipated, more and more people with higher qualifications will be needed in the future. Hence, more and more pupils will be allowed to continue their education into the higher levels of the school system and, eventually, equality of educational opportunity will be attained at high levels of participation, but it will always be consistent with the expansion of job and income opportunities. Young people who go on to higher levels of education will therefore not be cheated in terms of their chances in life.

Distinct from this stylized picture of what happens in the centrally planned economies, we could present an equally stylized picture of the situation in what in United Nations jargon is called the 'market economies': the economies of Western Europe and most of the developing countries. There we have also seen, particularly in the late 1950s and 1960s but also very much today, more or less ambitious exercises in manpower planning. In other words, in these countries as well, the necessity of establishing a closer quantitative relationship between the expansion of the school and the expansion of the economy has been understood. However, I believe it is fair to say that all these manpower plans and occupational and educational forecasts have proved to be so many blank cartridges.

This is not so much the case for the planners and other technicians, for they have amused themselves immensely. But for the political decision-makers, who work in a system which does not give them the power they would have in centrally planned countries, this certainly has been the case, for they have had, willy-nilly, to listen more or less attentively to the voice of the people, and the voice of the people has said: 'More!' Thus tension very quickly became apparent between what came to be called 'the social demand for education' (i.e. the amount of education that the individual wants) and the economic demand as calculated by the manpower planners. This race between social and economic demands has been won hands down by social demand: the individual has won the battle against the technocrat. The result has been that practically everywhere in the market-economy countries, we have seen the overshooting of social demand for education as compared to the absorptive capacity of the economy for specific skills. This has had, and is still having, implications for job and income opportunities for people with certain kinds of education.

Continuing our comparison with the stylized picture of the centrally planned economies, one could say that in the market economies the policy objective of equality in educational opportunities became *de facto* more important than assuring the individual that equality of educational opportunity would have guaranteed and permanent implications for his job and income opportunities. In other words, in the market economies we are observing that the economic 'price' of a given diploma or degree is falling as time passes. This does not mean that the social and cultural price of these diplomas and degrees may not remain the same or even increase—on the contrary! But that is not the subject of this paper. What is important to us are the following inescapable conclusions: (a) manpower plans have had no effect; (b) social demand has won the race; (c) there have been some increases in equality of educational opportunity; and (d) the economic value of schooling is decreasing at most levels.

These conclusions have two implications which have often been examined separately, but rarely together. The first implication has to do with the independent effect on life chances of the school as compared to social background; the second implication is the effect of the observed conclusions on income distribution.

Starting with the first and making a long story short (because the story is supposed to be well known), we are aware that as long as entry into a given level or branch of education is restricted, there exists a one-to-one relationship between a 'good' social background, that particular type of education, and a 'good' job. We know, furthermore, that as soon as that type of education becomes generalized, the one-to-one relationship holds only between the 'good' social background and the 'good' job. It seems that education drops out of the picture as far as its independent effect on job opportunities is concerned. Although this may seem paradoxical, it is in fact quite sensible. When everybody has reached a certain level of education, there is no longer any correlation between that level of education and normally resultant economic opportunities. That relationship exists only at those higher levels of education which have not yet been reached by the masses. I have explained the 'spiral theory' which is a consequence of this phenomenon elsewhere.[1] The conclusion with respect to the relatively small independent effect of education on existing societal inequalities could be rather pessimistic and defeatist.

This temptation should be resisted and has been by such men as Jan Tinbergen, and this brings us to the second implication, the one related to income distribution.

Tinbergen has shown that the so-called 'overshooting of social demand for education' has been an effective instrument for reducing income disparities between people with different levels of education.[2] As more education of a given type becomes available, the tendency to overshoot the economic absorptive capacity for that type of education will increase as will the implications for the income levels of individuals with that type of education as opposed to some other type. This is true at least in the long run, as Tinbergen has demonstrated by using time series for the Netherlands covering a period of sixty years. These time series showed that secondary and university education expanded faster and at a more rapidly accelerating pace compared to primary education during a first period, while during a second period university education was the growth pole. As a result, salary differentials decreased and income distribution improved.

This is certainly not inconsistent with the dominant role of social background described above. Jan Tinbergen has not introduced social background in his analysis, but if he had done so he could have shown that those more highly educated people who are the first to experience degradation in their job and income situation are those with a lower social background.

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[1] Louis Emmerij, *Can the school build a new social order?* Amsterdam, London, New York, Elsevier, 1974.

[2] Jan Tinbergen, *Income distribution: analysis and policies*, Amsterdam, North-Holland, 1975.

Educational opportunities and employment

The remarks above suggest that the link between education and employment is a highly complex one, and that it is dangerous to make sweeping statements and general observations about it. The crucial point in getting a grasp on this link is the term 'mismatch'. In more and more developing countries the result of the educational development pattern has been a growing mismatch between the qualification structure which the schools produce and the skill structure which the economy needs. It is interesting to note that exactly the same problem is now being observed in industrialized countries.

As a consequence, and also because of the overshooting of social demand, more and more people prefer to remain voluntarily unemployed and wait for the 'right' job to come along instead of taking an available job which does not meet their status and income expectations. This is what has been labelled the 'queuing problem': it results in higher unemployment levels than would normally be the case. Let me make it quite clear that I am not saying that this is an irrational decision on the part of the individual. On the contrary, individuals are rarely fools, and they certainly are not in this case, for if they were to take the first job that turns up, they might well ruin their career chances for the rest of their lives. Individuals act rationally in such situations for at least two reasons. First, because of the cannibalistic tendencies of the educational system, which puts pressure on people to stay in school as long as possible; second, because of the incentive structure of society which gives higher rewards to people who have spent more time at school.

This incentive structure is rather rigid in the medium and long term and reacts very slowly to changing supply and demand relationships. Salary levels remain high even when there is an over-supply of people with a given level of education. It is only in the long run that market forces re-enter the picture, as Tinbergen's results show. Three proposals have been made for doing something about the situation we have described: the first is the rather brutal measure of cutting sharply into the expansion of secondary and tertiary education through such means as *numerus clausus* and *numerus fixus*. This would be a very difficult road to travel both from the human and the political viewpoint.

A second approach, which is defended by Irma Adelman, argues for expanding education across the whole population as quickly as possible, because once economic growth starts, there will be rapidly increasing need for qualified people. For Irma Adelman this is, of course, part of a more general development theory which states that you must first distribute your most productive factor of production before allowing its productivity to increase. This would apply not only to education, but also to land and to capital.

Then there is a third approach which I would personally favour. This approach has several forms: I shall describe it first in the form that comes closest to the needs of the developing countries, and second in the variety that comes closer to the reality of the industrialized countries.

A future-oriented approach

Developing countries

My proposals take as a point of departure the following considerations:

1. Developing countries should learn by all possible means from the mistakes made in industrialized countries.
2. Such dictatorial measures as restricted entry procedures should be minimized.
3. Account should be taken of the fact that motivation occurs at very different points during an individual's life-span.
4. Parallel systems should be avoided.
5. The clumsy supertankers of education should be transformed into easily manœuvrable frigates.

To take the last point first, developing countries are experiencing a period of very rapid change in all segments of their societies. It simply is not possible for the slow-moving educational systems to adapt fast enough to those changes. This fact was, of course, recognized twenty years ago, when the movement of educational planning really got under way. This is why so much emphasis was put on long-term forecasts of manpower and other educational needs. It was deemed necessary because of the 'long gestation periods inherent to the educational process', as it has been called. But, as indicated already, the choices made by individual persons, based largely on actual incentives and opportunities in the economy, did not take any account of the planners' forecasts. It may be time to draw the conclusion from this state of affairs, e.g. that it is necessary to make the educational system more flexible and more quickly adaptable to the changes that occur around it in order to reduce the 'gestation periods'.

As to the fourth point, a perpetuation of a formal educational stream paralleled by a non-formal one will end up by leaving the formal system as it is, while the non-formal stream will gradually be absorbed or at least badly influenced by the rigid structures of formal education. Trying to remedy the ills caused by the school by adding other types of schools is clearly not a permanent solution. This does not really attack the illness at its roots.

The third point is important in so far as it is now recognized more and more that, while some types of education have to be instilled at an early age, this is not necessary for the upper and higher levels of education. Most individuals will only find their true vocation once they have been exposed to the 'facts of life' for a varying period of time. In most cases, this is after they have left school.

The importance of the second point is that it expresses doubts about the 'easy' educational policy measures so frequently proposed. It is easy to say that financial resources should be moved away from higher education and put into primary education and that therefore one should limit the number of pupils and students in higher education. It is, however, extremely difficult to implement such a policy within the existing educational structure and sequence. A more comprehensive approach must be identified which kills several birds with one stone. It is not only the numerical problem that must be solved; the other points mentioned earlier must also be dealt with.

The first point is a sensitive one because for so many years developing countries have been resisting every indication or pressure hinting at the necessity to adapt their schools to their true economic and social circumstances. However, my point is of a more general nature and has nothing whatsoever to do with the problem of prestigious versus less prestigious educational systems. It is inherent in any educational system that is of a sequential nature and is situated in an environment where people believe that education is the main instrument for opening up the possibilities of a better life. This has to do with the spiral theory already alluded to. My assertion is that, if the two conditions mentioned above are satisfied, expansion could go on *ad infinitum* without ever reaching the socio-economic objectives which lie behind the goals of educational expansion and equal opportunities in education.

Very briefly my assertion is based on the fact that when everybody has reached a certain level of education, there is no longer any correlation between that level and subsequent life-chances (in particular occupational and income opportunities). This is coupled to another fact, namely that those who are the last to reach that level will as a rule be those coming from lower social classes, who will then be pushed on towards the next higher level in order to obtain what they think will be a sufficient educational differential in order to be granted preferential treatment in getting jobs with better income-earning opportunities. However, others—as they will find out—were there before them and the principle of zero-correlation sets in once again and so they have to move on, and on. There is no end to this rat-race.

I consider this one of the main lessons to be learned from educational trends in the industrialized countries. It is my main reason for being in favour of getting rid of the sequential educational system and replacing it by a recurrent educational approach. All this ultimately leads me to a proposal which I will summarize very briefly now.

I am deeply convinced that the only realistic manner in which to make more effective the interdependency between education and work without dropping other important educational objectives is to distinguish between a period of education to be taken early in life, which one could call 'initial education' on the one hand, and a 'recurrent educational and training system' to be taken later in life on the other. For how many years the initial educational period should run is a matter for each country to decide. It could be anywhere between seven and seventeen years, according to the economic and social situation of a given country. The important point is that at the end of this period, the school-leaver is ready for both further education and entry into the labour market. Obviously, this will have important implications for the curricula, for the examination structure, and for teacher-training.

During the initial phase of schooling, and particularly towards the end of it, the pupil must be faced with a combination of theoretical and practical subjects in line with the double role which the pupil must be able to play upon leaving school. The tests to be given at the end of this period will have to reflect this broadening of the curricula quite precisely, in both a practical and a theoretical direction. The certificate handed out at the end of the early phase of education will not give the youngster an automatic entry ticket to a higher level of education.

There will be a break in the educational career, thus doing away with the sequential nature of the educational system. Care should be taken not to have this break applied dictatorially across the board. Exceptions must be made in unequivocal cases, but they must remain exceptions. The form will be that for people to enter the recurrent part of the educational system, they will have to show that they have had a working, or other practical, experience. This point is very important indeed because it destroys the monopoly of the school certificate and thereby diminishes its quasi-magical attraction. Entry into the recurrent part of the system is also possible without the 'initial school' certificate, but with an equivalent experience on the job or elsewhere. This is how drop-outs from the initial educational phase will get their second chance. The recurrent phase which, according to a country's situation, will include upper secondary and/or higher education will consist not only of the formal educational segments, but also of the non-formal ones. It will therefore be one integrated educational and training system avoiding the pitfalls of parallel streams.

The implications for the structure of the formal educational part will be considerable, because it will have to adapt to the non-formal parts rather than vice versa. There is by now a substantial amount of literature available on the kind of changes implied by an effort to move towards recurrent education. It is therefore not necessary for me to go into this yet again. The same holds true for the advantages that go hand in hand with such a flexible educational and training network, where motivated people can move easily and flexibly from work to both the formal and informal parts of the system.

And what about the financial feasibility of all this, the cynic will ask at this point. After all, what is implicit in this proposal is that universal education be attained as rapidly as possible for the duration of the initial educational phase.

First, there is the probability that the higher educational levels will expand less rapidly in a recurrent approach compared to the conventional educational set-up. This will be achieved in a much more natural fashion than could ever be attained within the framework of current educational structures. Second, however, such an educational change cannot be realized without parallel changes in the economy and in society as a whole. During the last five to ten years we have witnessed a great many proposals and experiments with respect to adapting economic and social development strategies. Their conclusions all point in the direction of the absolute necessity to introduce development strategies containing much stronger redistributive measures and policies compared to conventional development strategies.

This search has for the time being culminated in the debate about basic needs development strategies. One of the basic needs is, of course, education. It has been shown, albeit very tentatively, that it is possible economically and financially to meet the basic needs of everybody, including the poorest, within one generation.[1] It is in such a general development framework that the present proposal would fit most neatly. That does not mean that an attempt to introduce it in a different framework would not be worth while or unavoidably doomed in advance.

Industrialized countries

It is my contention that industrialized countries will not be able through economic measures to return to full employment as presently defined. On the demand side, therefore, it is highly improbable that these economies will be able to create sufficient productive employment opportunities. Consequently, something will have to be done on the supply side. In other words, we must influence the number of people who present themselves on the labour market in search of jobs. The influence exercised today is a negative one, in the sense that people are expelled from the labour force through unemployment or through the rich countries' way of hiding unemployment, i.e. by declaring individuals unfit for work even though their physical condition does not warrant such an extreme measure.

Small wonder, therefore, that in recent years an important discussion has started on how to divide the available number of jobs among the total number of people willing and able to work. Suggestions have been made by governments, trade unions and employers' organizations to decrease the retirement age, to increase the duration of compulsory schooling, to shorten the working day or working week, etc. All these suggestions linearly follow the trend that we have witnessed over many decades of improvement of working conditions.

It is obvious that the concept and definition of full employment in most industrialized societies today amounts to providing all those who are willing and able to work with a job at which they can work for eight hours a day, five days a week, forty-eight weeks a year, for forty-five or fifty years at a stretch. It was different in the past when people had to work more hours a day, more days per week and more weeks per year. If we were to apply the concept and definition of full employment of, say, some fifty years ago to today's situation (in other words, if we were to attempt to reach full employment as defined some fifty years ago), it is clear that the rate of unemployment would be very much higher than it actually is at present.

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[1] ILO, *Employment, growth and basic needs: a one-world problem*, Geneva, 1976.

I have dwelt at some length on this example in order to illustrate that most suggestions about redistribution of the available number of jobs are straightforward extrapolations of past trends. However, the question that must be raised is whether this is the best way to deal with the employment problem on the supply side in the present circumstances and, even more important, in the circumstances likely to exist in the 1990s and beyond. I believe that a different and more comprehensive approach is required to reduce the amount of time which individuals spend on the labour market during their life-spans. Such an approach would not be limited to relatively unimportant measures of labour market policy, but would consist of a more global package, including educational policies, labour-market policies, social policies, combined with the economic and development co-operation policies discussed in the second section of this paper.

I believe that a social and cultural policy package should be proposed, in addition to the economic proposals. The one characteristic of the new package is that it would combine a progressive policy with leaving the greatest possible initiative to the individual so that he has more control over the shaping of his career and life pattern than is the case at present. Such a global approach must also be able to deal with the rationing of labour, but as a by-product rather than as a major and unique objective.

What would be the contours of such a global approach to the employment problem in industrialized countries? The life of an individual is divided into three parts, separated in most countries by watertight partitions: (a) the period spent at school and, for the more fortunate, at university; (b) active life, whether spent on the labour market or not, whether remunerated or not; and (c) the period spent after retirement.

These periods follow one another sequentially. We go to school at an early age and remain there until (depending on the country) 16 or 18 years and, in the case of university students, very often up to the age of 25 or even older. Then we enter the period of so-called active life until the age of 60 or 65, when we are kindly but firmly asked to go out into retirement. It is very difficult—particularly in most European countries—to reverse the sequence of these three events. *The essence of this proposal is to transform this rigid sequential system into a more flexible recurrent system, in which it will be possible to combine or alternate periods of education, work and retirement throughout a person's adult life.*

The idea of recurrent education which cuts through the first two periods of life mentioned above, was launched some ten years ago and has been discussed ever since. The complementary idea of retirement 'à la carte' has been discussed less frequently, but is the logical extension and the mirror image of recurrent education because it cuts across the second and third periods. Individuals could even be given an opportunity to combine all three periods by, for example, taking at age 30 a period of six months of anticipated retirement in order to continue or resume further education. Although this sounds extremely straightforward and simple, in reality it amounts to a social and cultural change of the first order.

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Before going into somewhat more detail it is important to underline the advantages of such an approach for the various partners, social and individual. In the first place, this much more flexible approach would enable an equally flexible labour-market policy to be introduced which would have advantages both for employers and for workers. The employers would obtain a labour force which could be more easily and more quickly retrained in line with technological changes. The workers would get an easier and more frequent chance to reorient themselves.

As indicated, experience has shown that it is nearly impossible to make more or less reliable long-term forecasts of the occupational and educational structures of the labour force. It is therefore much more realistic and desirable to shorten the gestation periods because, by doing so, the educational system will become more easily adaptable. In other words, the relationship between school and work will become closer, more effective and more beneficial to all parties.

In the second place, there is a specific advantage to the individual in terms of self-fulfilment and of being able to better realize his full potential. We all know that motivation occurs at very different moments in a person's life and not necessarily at those points in time required by the sequential educational system. Educational opportunities and achievements will definitely be enhanced if individuals can go back to school when they are motivated to do so instead of being pushed by parents or other persons in authority to remain in school. These people are right, of course, because in the present set-up it is difficult to return to school once you have dropped out.

What is true for educational opportunities is equally true for occupational and income opportunities. In the global approach which I favour, the individual has more than one occasion to (re)orient himself in the labour market. I go even further and offer individuals the possibility to take a period of anticipatory retirement earlier in life, during which they do not necessarily have to return to school but can do other things for which they are strongly motivated at that particular time of their lives.

In the third place, and precisely because of its flexibility, our approach is also an effective anti-cyclical weapon. At times when a particularly strong but temporary storm approaches the economic coasts of our countries, it would be possible to stimulate more people to withdraw for a while from the labour force in order to benefit from either recurrent education or a sabbatical period.

In the fourth place, and this is among others an anti-structural weapon, we shall have on average fewer people on the labour market and at each point in time than is presently the case because—and again on average—people will spend more time in the first and third blocks of their life as compared to the second. In this way, total labour supply will diminish.

Thus, the approach advocated here is a generalization on the one hand of traditional trade-union demands for shorter working hours, more holidays and earlier retirement and, on the other hand, of the more recent proposals with respect to part-time work, the sharing of jobs, and the rationing of labour supply in general. This global approach thus kills several birds with one stone: the economic structural limits for once will be consistent with the socio-cultural objectives of the individual. Instead of a diminishing majority which works harder and harder and an increasing minority which is expelled shamefully from the labour market, I am proposing that available work be rationed in a more intelligent and comprehensive fashion than has been suggested so far.

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This volume presents the conclusions of a seminar organised by the International Institute for Educational Planning on the subject of inequalities in education and employment, together with five of the contributions presented for discussion.

Faced with a situation in which, despite the exceptionally rapid growth of educational systems over the past two decades, inequalities in educational access and achievement persist—and sometimes, even, are increasing—many Third-World countries are now making "equality of opportunity" a major target in their educational development plans. However, at a time when educational expenditure in many countries has reached a ceiling, reliance can no longer be placed on the continuing expansion of the educational system for the gradual disappearance of inequalities. Profound changes are necessary in the orders of priority; new strategies of organisation and planning must be found, which will contribute more efficiently than in the past to the reduction of inequalities.

This seminar reflected the views of policy-makers and planners from various developing countries, research workers in the field of educational inequalities, and representatives of bilateral and multilateral aid agencies. It thus facilitated a fruitful dialogue between experts with different points of view but with a common concern—the aim of genuine democratisation.

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